

# FAIR CONDITION, SOME PAGES MISSING

MEMOIRS, ANECDOTES, DATA, AND IMAGES  
FROM A MILDLY MATURE MEN'S BOOK GROUP



THE LAST THURSDAY BOOK CLUB

SILVER ANNIVERSARY

***Blackledge Books***

*14321 Stalgren Court NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87123*

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# QUOT LIBROS QUAM BREVE TEMPUS

## *Memory*

*All alone in the moonlight  
I can smile at the old days  
I was beautiful then  
I remember  
The time I knew what happiness was  
Let the memory live again*

— *Grizabella, Cats*<sup>1</sup>

*We reached New Mexico in March, up through El Paso on a day so clear and cold it looked like you could see all the way north to the Sangre de Cristos on the Colorado border. ... When we saw an eagle turn over the empty road we stopped in a kind of ecstasy and got out to stand on the roadside to breathe and turn in circles and wave our arms. What was this place?*

— *Stephen Bodio, Querencia*

*In the end, people don't view their life as merely the average of all its moments—which, after all, is mostly nothing much plus some sleep. For human beings, life is meaningful because it is a story. A story has a sense of a whole, and its arc is determined by the significant moments, the ones where something happens. Measurements of people's minute-by-minute levels of pleasure and pain miss this fundamental aspect of human existence. A seemingly happy life may be empty. A seemingly difficult life may be devoted to a great cause. We have purposes larger than ourselves.*

— *Atul Gawande, Being Mortal*

*“Everybody does have a book in them, but in most cases that's where it should stay.”*

— *Christopher Hitchens*

*“Don't let it end like this. Tell them I said something.”*

— *Pancho Villa, last words*

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<sup>1</sup> From the musical *Cats* by Andrew Lloyd Webber; inspired by T.S. Eliot's *Rhapsody on a Windy Night*

## *Preface*

Anniversaries are the milestones by which we humans pave the path to the future with the memories of the past. Often it is not so much the instant of origin that we commemorate as it is the interval itself and the activities that have transpired in the time elapsed. We seem to be swept up in time – do we have enough time? Do we have time for this? What time is it now, and when did we start? When will we finish?

This collection came about at the suggestion and instigation of the Poet Laureate of the Last Thursday Book Club of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Prof. Gilbert reminded us that we have been reading the works of others for some twenty-five years, and it was high time that we read some self-produced literature, with reflections on our own Lives.

We have been doing that in a limited manner for twenty-five years. When a member misses a meeting, it is not uncommon that he will read the month's selection and send to the host a summary of thoughts, and an overall grade on the author's work. Grades of pure A, B, C, are too limiting – we quickly equivocated into distinguishing between a B+ and an A-. Humans mostly, professors all.

But it is the book discussions that make our meetings special. The viewpoints exchanged. The impact of the words written *then* interspersed with comments on the *now*: the times, the troubles, the vagaries of Life Experienced. We cannot capture those discussions here, lost to the ephemeral dimension of time. What we have captured are thoughts and memories – of time elapsed and well spent.

*Amanuensis*  
The Last Thursday Book Club  
Albuquerque New Mexico USA  
29 April 1993 – 29 April 2018

## Dedication

*To our departed colleague, Richard W. Arms, Jr.*

(1 December 1935 – 10 March 2018)





The Last Thursday Book Club  
Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA

# The Lede

***Men Behaving.*** That is the alternate title for this compilation. However, The Reader will soon discover that behavior is subjective, and behavior of septuagenarians is subject to the context of several decades.

The first segment of this compilation consists of memoirs submitted by the current members of the Last Thursday Book Club of Albuquerque. The only restrictions on these were a target word count of 1500 words and a maximum of 2000. That equates to a four-page memoir. The tone for this collection is set with an essay by **Richard W. Arms**, to whom this book is dedicated.

The memoirs were originally meant to be the sub-total of this collection, but you can't meet for 25 years without creating some work products. We wanted to include something representative, as for a book group over that length of time, the choices are many. We've included for you a look at the summaries from one exemplary year: 2004 – far enough in the past as to be historical, long enough after inception to be representative. And what is the preparation accomplished by a host each month? A sample is implied here, built around T.E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, which itself has its 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary approaching as we publish *Fair Condition* – and we never lost our manuscript on the London subway.

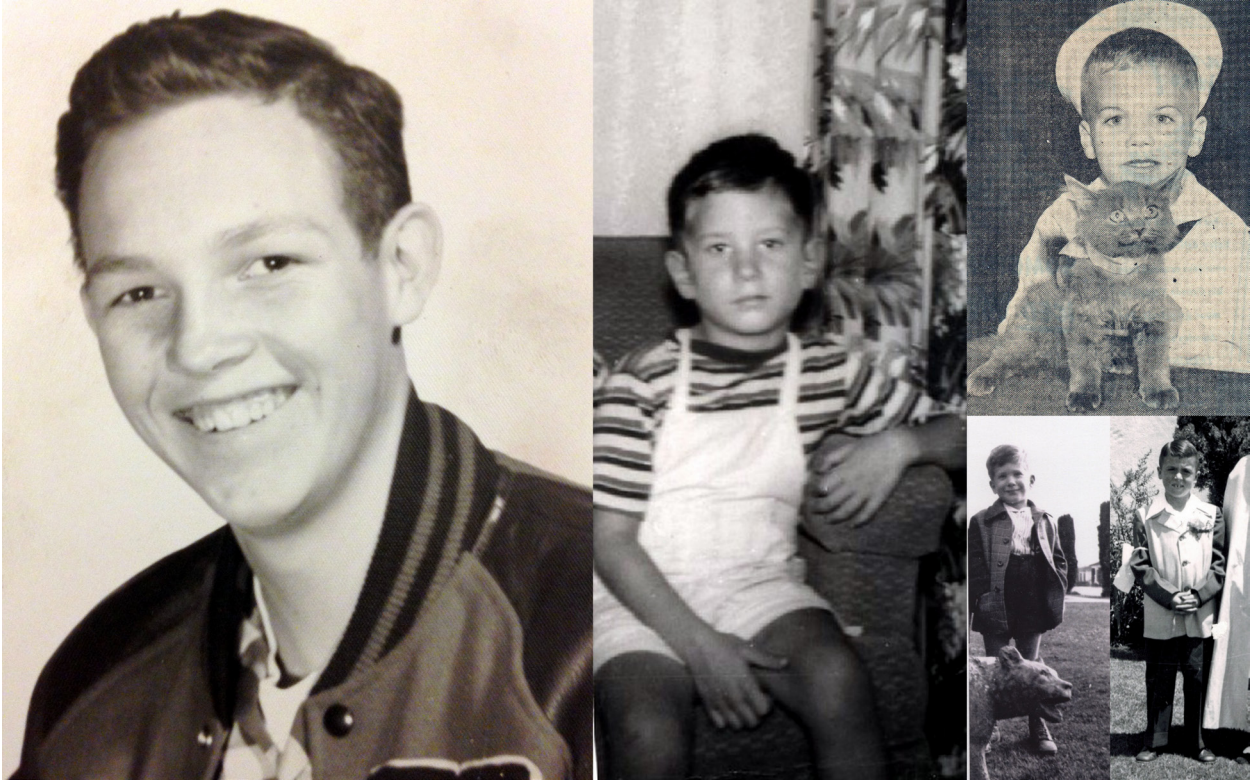
Not every book group boasts of a poet laureate, but we are not your typical book club. We include here some of reviews in rhyme submitted over the years by our PL. We also enjoyed a few field trips during our younger years, and we captured a few photos to share as well.

Perhaps of most importance is our collection of first lines, and our complete ordered list of the 300 or so books we have devoured over this quarter century. The order is important, because we are in sharp contrast with other lists such as Modern Library's 100 top novels in the English language, top 100 non-fiction, etc. But what is the best of the best? Our list is all inclusive, and the Reader need not bother with any other list. We've done the work for you.

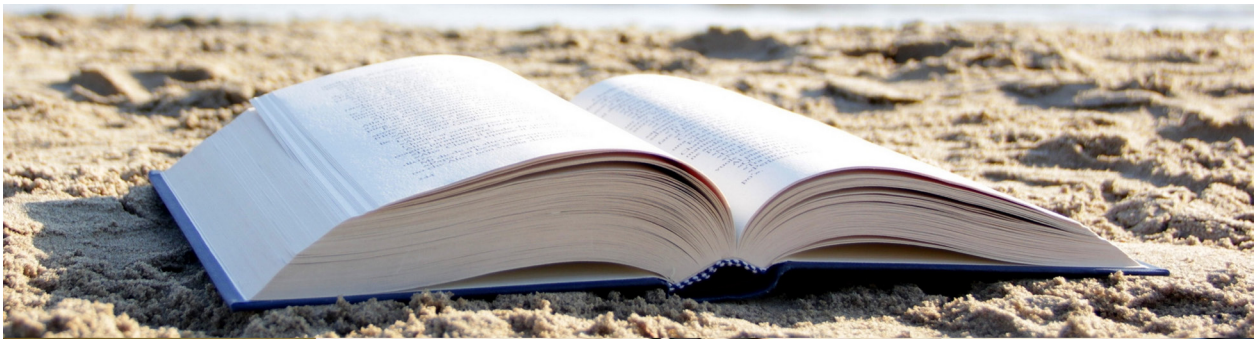
When we first started this club, we were a collection of males in our 50s and 60s. The thought occurred: which of us would first be transported beyond the painted veil? As it turned out, we lost three spouses before we lost our first member. Since then, we have lost three more. Included in this book is a tribute by our PL to each of the four members who died during this quarter century – our 'missing pages.'

Finally, we conclude with some thoughts on memories and reflections – and on to the next twenty-five! If our Club is not around, perhaps you might carry the concept forward.









# Memoir

**Memoir  
is your truth  
created from  
your memory  
and your  
experience.**

**-Lisa Dale Norton**  
author of *Shimmering Images*

# The Tackle Box<sup>i</sup>

*by Richard W. Arms*

I didn't even know where it came from at first. I was finally getting around to cleaning out some shelves in the far corner of the garage. I had put it off for years, but I needed the space, and the old boxes of financial records needed to be shredded in order to make room for newer versions of the same sort of things; those things that you feel you need to keep but that you will actually never look at again. So on rare occasions you get rid of the oldest and least important. That was what I was finally doing when I came across the old tackle box. It was back behind the boxes, hidden from view these many years. I looked at it in wonderment and puzzlement. It had a familiar appearance but I knew it had never been mine. Fishermen know their equipment intimately, and make choices that reflect their preferences. I had never used that tackle box and I never would have bought it. It was too big, too heavy, too old-fashioned. Yet there was something familiar about it.

Pleasantly using it as a diversion from my chore I took it off the shelf and carried it across to my workbench. It was made of steel, once painted dark green but now largely just a rusty brown that left dusty smears on my jeans. A clasp at the top, under the handle that had probably once been covered with leather but was now just metal, held the two sections of the domed top together. I could see that if I could lift the front of the clasp and undo the fastener the two sections of the top would swing out, revealing the interior of the tackle box. But the thick rust had solidified it to a mass of reddish brown. Finally with screwdriver, wire brush and pliers, I was able to pry it open and then wedge the two halves of the lid apart. Suddenly, out of the box burst a flood of odors, and with them a wave of memories, and I knew immediately what it was.

What first assaulted me was not what I saw but what I smelled. It was the smell of "bug juice": citronella. And also, more subtle, the smell of pipe tobacco. It was the dusty smell bridging a gap of many years before, yet it brought back a deluge of memories. It was the smell of fishing camps in the woods, and the smell of wood smoke from a fireplace. I may not have really smelled it but I thought I detected Scotch whisky, and burned hotdogs and maybe even grilled steaks. It was the aroma of wet woolen sweaters and rubber boots drying in a corner. Here I had again found Harry. It was not the Harry of the Country Club or the Harry of the Cadillacs, which were all he would condescend to drive. It was the other Harry. It was the Harry when he became what I imagined he wished he was.

I didn't need to even open the box further to know what I would find, but I did manage to pry the lids up. It was as I anticipated. There were three salmon fly fishing reels, manual of course.

Harry would never have used an automatic reel. There were boxes of streamer flies and a number of prepared leaders. I saw extra fly lines, line dressing, reel oil in a metal tube and a hook sharpener. Looking further I encountered the inevitable pouch of pipe tobacco, and even a package of pipe cleaners. A pair of pliers too rusted to open and a pocketknife in similar condition. There was little order to the arrangement of the contents. Here Harry was able to allow disorder, because this was the other Harry.

This tackle box was from another era, a time before I had married Harry's daughter. In later years I fished with Harry, but I knew it was not the same as his Maine fishing trips with "the boys" as he referred to them. Yet I thought I got to know Harry so well in the next forty years that I could feel what that box had meant to him. We fished in Mexico and fished in Colorado, we fished the tidewaters in Maine and the coves on Cape Cod. We fished for trout in New Mexico and mackerel in the Damariscotta River and yellowtail in the Gulf of California. But the Salmon fishing at Rangeley Lake was before my time and it was something special that he only obliquely referenced from time to time. Yet here, in this tackle box, I sensed that I had opened again a very special part of Harry's life, and that I could at least in a small part recall what I had come to understand of Harry because of it.

There is something about fishing that brings out the underlying genuineness of a person, I believe. Perhaps it is a primitive and instinctive thing, wherein the hunter or the fisherman in early times when occupied in these tasks was only concerned with his own preservation and needy of self-reliance. I know that no amount of money, influence, position of importance, worldly accomplishments, or even piety can influence whether that fish is going to gobble a worm or rise to a fly. A trout does not care whether you are wearing blue jeans or a tuxedo. The striped bass or bluefish does not care if you are in a canoe or a yacht. Beautiful people don't catch more fish than ugly ones. The indifference of the quarry makes us abandon our posturing and pretexts. Or so it seemed with Harry.

Harry was a success. Harry was moderately wealthy. Not rich, but well off enough to do what he wanted to in his spare time. And what Harry wanted to do in his spare time was go fishing. Not catch fish, although that added to the pleasure, but just go fishing. And, moreover, although he would condescend in later years to fish any small lake or large bay, his real love was to go fishing in such a way that it became a ritual. To Harry, who had a disdain for organized religion, perhaps because of a religious upbringing, fishing brought back that participation in a liturgy. He who had once been an altar boy now served at the altar of Isaac Walton. And that ritualistic fishing entailed going with a group of men who also worshiped at the same altar. There were very well delineated parameters in a men's fishing camp. They entailed not only actually fishing, but included plaid woolen shirts, chest waders, grilled steaks, moderate drinking, pipe smoking and, most of all the green tackle box. The fishing rod had to be split bamboo in those days, and preferably made in England or Scotland of Tonkin cane. You tied your own flies in the winter, and

had a couple of boxes of them ready to go. Only fishing bought out these factors that I came to believe were the real Harry. And the smells and sights from that tackle box encompassed what I thought of as the real Harry, that I had come to know and respect.

I too in later years had participated in similar rituals. In Alaska, fishing for halibut and Salmon off Prince of Wales Island I had experienced the same bonding of fishermen. All the others at the lodge were from very prosaic lives, as was I, I am sure. But there was no discussion of families, or jobs of educations or careers of aspirations. We were fishermen, joined together in the primitive ritual of seeking to outwit fish. That other life was out of bounds. We discussed the waters and the baits and the weather, and the outlook for the next day. We spoke of the talent or lack of talent of the skippers of the boats we were fishing from. We boasted of big ones caught and bemoaned even bigger ones lost.

Such, I envisioned, had to have been the atmosphere at that remote fishing camp in Maine, many years before I had even met Harry. "The Boys" were, like Harry, businessmen. But they were there to fish. I wondered if maybe Harry clung to this group with its illusion of remoteness and independence. The masculine bonding would have appealed to him. Harry's success in that other world he was escaping from, although undoubtedly well earned, had come from taking over and becoming president of a company his father had founded. I wondered if he might have felt a little apologetic that his success might be questioned for that reason. Certainly the ground rules of the fishing camp allowed him to put those feelings aside. I am sure he did not mention his family and his wealth just as the others did not. Yes, this tackle box told a very interesting story about a man I had come to think I had understood. So now, years later, I was standing at my workbench in my garage, smelling and feeling the contents of his tackle box, and remembering my father in law, now gone a number of years. I was sure that I understood this man. He had gone off on his fishing trips with "The Boys" and become, I believed, the underlying person who he really was, separated from the cares he left behind.

Thinking these thoughts, I was looking down into the scattered debris in the box. I noticed a small metal can that had once held some sort of lozenges, perhaps cough drops, since Harry was always prepared for any medical emergency. It was at the bottom of the box, covered by, and seemingly hidden by, two boxes of flies. I lifted it out of the tackle box and shaking it heard something rustling inside. No doubt a lure or some flies I thought, but the lid was rusted closed. No amount of twisting or banging would let me pry off the cover. Were these, I wondered, his special flies; his secret weapons? Did he hide them at the bottom of the tackle box to keep them from the curious eyes of his companions; "The Boys"? It seemed a secret I wanted to understand.

There is little that can withstand the combination of WD-40 and a large pair of vise grips. It took a while but I finally was able to twist the metal cover and break it loose from its coating of rust.

Lifting it up and peering into the can there was little to see except a dim grey rectangle of heavy paper. I reached in and carefully brought it out. Under it was a small lock of hair, tied with a faded pale blue ribbon. Lifting the paper to the light I realized it was a small faded photograph. It was of a young girl, perhaps ten years old, with brown hair that seemed to match the color of the wisp with the ribbon. I suddenly realized that this was a picture of the little girl who would one day become my wife.



The author on fishing trip in Alaska, 1956.

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<sup>i</sup> From *The Tackle Box: Stories About People Who Fish* by Richard W. Arms (Belfort & Bastion, December 19, 2015), ISBN 978-06926602638. Reprinted with permission of the family.



# A Portrait of the Traveler as an Old Man

*by Gary Ganong*

Born and raised on Staten Island, New York, I attended Public School #3 in an old building with one class per grade. I was senior class president at Tottenville High School, which had 1,000 students and was the smallest high school in New York City. I lettered in tennis and was a member of the honor society, but missed being salutatorian at the graduation ceremony in order to report to the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) in June for basic cadet training. During my high school years, I played the organ for church, the piano for Sunday school at the small Princes Bay Reformed Church and was a Boy Scout.

Our family never traveled west of Princeton, NJ, before I went to USAFA. My first plane ride was to Denver and the academy. Two West Point cadets on the plane advised Greg Hildebrandt and me to arrive at USAFA on the last bus. We took their sage advice, which delayed the start of basic training a few hours for us. After basic training, I was assigned to 19th Squadron for four years. My goal was to become an engineer and I took the extra courses to major in Engineering Science. I dated girls from Colorado College in Colorado Springs, and a friend recommended Susan Wiesendanger as blind date for a football game.

We dated for two years and Susan borrowed my unreliable, rusty '53 Ford to drive to practice-teaching. On two successive weekends the radiator and thermostat failed and the old Ford erupted in front of a cadet audience, just as Susan arrived alongside Vandenberg Hall to pick me up. In spite of my old car, we became engaged. Susan's parents felt sorry for their daughter and gave her their '63 Chevy Impala. We sold the Ford for \$50 and kept the Chevy for 36 years. We were married the Saturday after graduation in Union, Missouri.

Our first assignment was for thirteen months for my Master of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Michigan. We enjoyed the Rose Bowl winning football team and the Cazzie Russell-led basketball team which ended up #2 in the NCAA finals. My second assignment was to the Air Force Weapons Laboratory at Kirtland Air Force Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico. We drove into Albuquerque through what I remember as a desolate Tijeras Canyon, thinking how bleak it looked compared to Colorado. Little did we know that we would spend 32 years in Albuquerque and come to love desert landscape and southwest culture.

I had never used digital computers until that point and was attracted to the opportunity to learn how to perform large-scale calculations with computational fluid mechanics codes. The Weapons Laboratory had two Control Data Corporation 6600 computers, the most advanced large-scale machines at that time, each the size of a large room. For four years I performed calculations of nuclear fireballs, atomic clouds and non-ideal air blast phenomena. Susan taught at the Job Corps Center for Women, operated by Packard Bell. Her parents had moved to Tucson and we were able to travel there frequently on weekends.

Colonel Phil Erdle had been my advisor at USAFA and recruited me to teach in the Engineering Mechanics Department. I taught there from 1969 to 1973. Our daughter was born in the USAFA hospital during June Week. We bought our first house in Cragmoor and lived on the same street with four other USAFA instructors. The view of Pikes Peak from our living room was spectacular, as was the morning drive to work through the academy forests. We made life-long friends during this assignment.

A central board selected me for assignment to Colorado State University (CSU) in Fort Collins for my doctorate. By doing some coursework with television tapes at USAFA before assignment to CSU, I was able to complete my degree in two years (1973-1975). Bill Browning preceded me and Tom Kullgren followed me, as we helped our professor complete the research on an Air Force grant for fracture mechanics. Our son was born in the Poudre Valley Memorial Hospital in Fort Collins. We enjoyed our second home with its view of Horsetooth Mountain. It was nice to be a grad student with an Air Force paycheck.

My old friends at the Air Force Weapons Laboratory requested my reassignment there. I returned to the same organization and resumed hydrodynamic calculations of nuclear clouds and blast waves. The nuclear effects portion of the Air Force Weapons Laboratory reorganized regularly and I expanded my responsibilities and involvement into cratering, ground shock, protective structures and nuclear blast simulation and testing.

After five years, I transferred across the base to Test Directorate, Defense Nuclear Agency, enabling our family to remain at Kirtland AFB another four years. Test Directorate was responsible for underground nuclear testing, high explosive simulations and electro-magnetic simulators. I was in charge of the technical directors for each test. Our tests were at Nevada Test Site, White Sands Missile Range and Kirtland AFB. During my last year, I was heavily involved in the nuclear hardness testing of the Hard Mobile Launcher system.

Faced with leaving the work I enjoyed doing, I retired from the Air Force in 1984 and accepted a position at Logicon RDA, working on testing and modeling of nuclear weapon effects. RDA had been acquired by Logicon and consisted of the former Physics Department at the Rand Corporation. When Daniel Ellsberg leaked the Pentagon Papers, the Defense Department encouraged the members of the Rand Corporation Physics Department to form a new company, Research and Development Associates (RDA), to protect the nation's nuclear secrets from compromise. Later RDA was acquired by Logicon making its founders millionaires. When I arrived, RDA was a division of Logicon, but the staff contained many famous names in nuclear weapon effects, such as Pete Haas, Hal Brode, Forrest Gilmore, Skip Knowles and John Lewis.

At Logicon RDA, I supported underground nuclear tests, high-explosive tests, shock tubes and small-scale testing. Years later when terrorism became a national concern, the expertise which we and our customer had in nuclear weapon effects was transferred to the problems of biological and chemical hazards. Defense Nuclear Agency evolved to Defense Special Weapons Agency, then to Defense Threat Reduction Agency. Logicon RDA evolved to Logicon and was acquired by Northrop

Grumman. Later Northrop Grumman spun off its Science and Engineering Technical Advisors to avoid conflict of interest issues. The spin-off used the acronym TASC as its name, the well-known name of an earlier acquisition. Later TASC was acquired by the Engility Corporation. Thus I worked for four different companies and never changed my job in 33 years.

Reading has always been a passion in our family. Susan was a member of a woman's book club which met on the last Thursday of every month. One of the husbands, John Beresky, a chiropractor, was envious of the ladies' night out together and asked the wives to invite their husbands to a men's book club which he started on April 29, 1993. Three men showed up at the first meeting: Tom Genoni, Dan Hendricks and myself. We discussed Norman Maclean's "A River Runs Through It," a tour de force. Dan never returned to our new men's book club. I recruited many of my friends and associates, including Mike Blackledge, Ron Bousek, Keith Gilbert, Jack Ferrell, Don Benoist, Ben Smith and John Gilbert Taylor. Don Benoist and Ben Smith have passed away. John Taylor moved to Miami.

Our house in Albuquerque had a spectacular view of the Sandia Mountains, and we loved the friendly neighborhood, climate, and cultures of New Mexico. Our children attended thirteen grades of school in Albuquerque. Susan was very active in parent-teacher organizations. I coached soccer for 11 years for both boys' and girls' teams. The best physical shape I have ever been in was during my last year of coaching soccer when I would play keep-away with the high-school-age boys. Both of our kids participated in science fairs in Albuquerque and at the state level and did well. Our daughter graduated from Colorado College, became teacher qualified and married a cadet from North Carolina in the USAFA chapel. Our son graduated from the University of Denver and Carnegie Mellon, married a girl from Pittsburgh, lives in Portland, Oregon, and works for Intel.

Our son-in-law obtained his masters degree and was assigned to Tullahoma, Tennessee. Other USAFA graduates recruited him to work for Hewlett Packard in Roseville, California. After four years in the Air Force, they made the move and bought a house in nearby Rocklin and began a family. After a few years of taking every opportunity to visit our daughter's family in Rocklin, I suggested to Susan that we move to Rocklin and have time to travel elsewhere. In 2003, we bought a resale in a retirement community with a great view, 2.5 miles from our three grandsons.

Living in a retirement community has encouraged us to get involved in community activities and church. I started a men's book club and run a chess club. Church has kept us busy teaching Sunday school. The previous owners of our home left us with a garden which requires lots of work that I enjoy.

I missed the Last Thursday Book Club after I moved to Rocklin in 2003. Our Springfield Active Senior Community has a Springfield Book Club, which I quickly joined. However, women dominated the club and its book selections. So I organized a Men's Book Club which began its first meeting in April 2004 with a discussion of "*The Old Man and the Sea*." It was easy to form a club since we had a clubhouse and a monthly magazine, the *Springfield News*. Members suggested a

book and we planned only for the next three months. Many of the first few books were about water or ships: "*Ship of Gold in the Deep Blue Sea*," "*Ship of Miracles*," "*A River Runs Through It*," "*Peace Like a River*" and "*The River God*." Eventually we outgrew the need to read about ships and rivers, although a recent selection was the wonderful "*Goodbye to a River*" by John Graves.

At one time, some of our members asked me to exclude women from attending our meetings. This led to our club being dropped from the official clubs and having to go underground. We had last dibs on available meeting locations and had to advertise only by e-mail. We filed a new charter which was non-exclusionary and were welcomed back into the official clubs. Women rarely attend our meetings. They feel out of place although we are courteous and welcoming to every new member. We advertise our Men's Book Club in the array of club brochures in the lobby and have a monthly article which appears in the *Springfield News*. We have 24 members but the most that have attended is 17. During travel seasons, sometimes only six members will show up. Our current format is for the sponsor to read a short biography of the author and then we proceed around the room giving our comments on the book. The meetings last one hour so each member gets about three or four minutes to speak. The meetings end at noon, then half of us go to lunch at a local bistro (everyone is welcome).

On two occasions, our book club hosted poetry symposiums instead of discussing a book. Many members feel uncomfortable discussing poetry and do not attend. Others enjoy it immensely. Any book which pushes members beyond their comfort zone will be poorly received. "*The Sun Also Rises*" was disliked by most members who could not appreciate that it was a cult book in its day. They rejected the characters as unlikable people, unsuitable for a sedate retirement community.

Susan and I have traveled extensively. The incredible sights and different cultures of China, Japan and Turkey have been our favorite trips so far, although we enjoyed driving around Europe on our own when we were younger. I like to thoroughly study the destination prior to a trip and know all about everything I am going to see. We have taken trips with our daughter's family and often shared a condo at the beach for a week. Our favorite area is Monterey-Carmel-Santa Cruz, where there is enough variety to please everyone.

Looking back, I can recall with pleasure my youth, my days at USAFA, and enjoyable careers in the USAF and at Logicon-Northrop Grumman-TASC. I have always been excited about the day's challenges. Now that I am retired, I find that there are too many things that I want to pursue in life. My appetite for new activities is greater than the time available.

We leave behind our legacies of family and community and church activities and successful careers. Raising a family and participating in community activities can be hard work but is very satisfying. We are blessed.

---

# Grandson of the Circus

*by Jack Ferrell*

I've always been a wanderer. Whether it's places, homes, or jobs, I've always been on the move looking for something different. It comes naturally and started early. It's in my blood.

My mother's and father's parents harbored desires to wander, which they inherited from their ancestors. My maternal grandparents and great grandfather were in the circus. My paternal grandfather was an itinerant preacher and his wife's grandparents left everything familiar to them in Germany to move to the United States in the 19th century.

I was fortunate as a child to spend a lot of time every summer with my grandparents and great grandparents. My maternal grandmother, whom we called Mom, lived near Akron, Ohio, and she would regale me with stories and pictures of my ancestors. I saw old photos of my mother's father as an aerialist and my grandmother as a member of a band in one of the many circuses which crisscrossed the country early in the 20th century. My mother's grandfather was the leader of that circus band and when they were not playing for the circus he traveled around the Midwest on the vaudeville circuit. I also spent time with my paternal grandparents and great grandparents in Warsaw, Ohio. My great grandmother, Lucille Lindt, whose parents had immigrated from Germany in the 19th century, told me stories about a world far from Ohio. Grandpa Ferrell was a carpenter and itinerant preacher, who often took me to tent revival meetings which I found frightening at times but also exciting, because the drama inside that tent on hot and humid nights was so different from what I was accustomed to at home. These summers steeped me in stories of foreign places and other-worldly experiences which inflamed my imagination.

My mother and dad were not immune to wanderlust. My family moved four times to different towns in Ohio before I reached the age of seven. My father held a number of jobs. He had been a bar owner and a clerk for the railroad and worked at Akron Brass which manufactured fittings for firefighting equipment and ships. After World War II he hauled coal and gravel and became a foreman at a pottery. In 1947 he started selling pottery lawn ornaments and vegetables at a roadside stand on U.S. Route 250 two miles outside of Wooster, Ohio. That specific spot along the highway was important to my father because it was the main route the local Amish people took to get into town, driving their buggies right by my father's stand. Within a year after setting up the stand, Dad and his father built a house for us and a small grocery store at that spot along the highway where I was to live with my four siblings for the next ten years, learning the grocery business and the elements of customer service.

My father built a good business specializing in meats, cheeses and homemade ice cream. He also had a “huckster” route, as he called it, selling staples to the Amish community out of a converted school bus. Working in the store and accompanying my dad on the “huckster” route gave me an opportunity to interact with and serve different kinds of people and learn different traditions. Although I was not traveling outside the boundaries of three counties in northeastern Ohio, I was exposed to other worlds.

Then an important friendship developed between a foreign exchange student and me at the high school in our little town of Apple Creek. It was 1957 when I met Georg Pfäfflin from Germany. He was a pastor's son hosted in Apple Creek by our pastor. Rev. Hartmann charged me with the responsibility of keeping Georg out of trouble during the year he was to live in our community. That job took a lot of effort and as a consequence Georg and I became very close friends. It was educational and fun getting to know him and getting to know about his country and their way of life. During the course of those first six months, I became intrigued with the idea of a full immersion experience in a foreign culture. With Georg's encouragement I applied to become an exchange student in France under the auspices of the International Christian Youth Exchange. I was accepted and scheduled to depart for France in July 1958, but as fate would have it, President Eisenhower and General DeGaulle got into a tiff that spring and canceled all cultural exchanges between the United States and France six weeks before I was to depart. Fortunately, a family near Hamburg, Germany, agreed to host me. Armed with only three German words (*ja, nein, danke*), I sailed from New York City aboard the *Aurora Sky* for the ten-day crossing to Bremerhaven.

It was a life-changing experience for a seventeen-year-old kid from a small farming town in northeastern Ohio. I was welcomed by a large loving family who treated me as one of their own. During the year I was there I not only learned another language, drank my first beer and lived in an urban setting of over 1.5 million people, which I had never experienced before, but also I was able to travel by train and bus around western Europe. I visited France, Belgium, Holland, Austria and Italy—places I had only read about in books I borrowed from our county library bookmobile.

Upon my return to Ohio the following year, I started college as a geology major, worked as a janitor in an elementary school, and nursed this strong desire within me to explore the world.

By the end of the third semester I was really struggling to successfully complete the math requirements of my major. While standing in line during class registration in the gymnasium in front of the geology table to sign up for the next semester's courses, I decided at the last minute to change my major course of study. Since the academic departments' tables were arranged alphabetically, I simply moved from geology to German.



In the late winter and early spring of 1961, I started making major changes in the direction of my life. Not only had I changed my major in college with the idea of pursuing a career in the foreign service, I had also exchanged my job as a janitor for a job as a farmhand, and most importantly I was dating my former high school sweetheart, Cheryl.

Cheryl and I married that fall. During the next two years, my grades improved dramatically, I took on a job in a paint brush factory, our son Brian was born, and I graduated with a B.A.

My plan since my junior year had been to pursue a master's degree at The Ohio State University in preparation for a career in the Department of State, but my academic adviser at the College of Wooster would not recommend me for the program at Ohio State, so I decided to join the Navy. John Kennedy was President and there was a lot of idealism and thoughts of service to one's country floating around at that time. My thinking was that I would put in my four years in the military, go to graduate school, and then take the foreign service exam. I went to the Navy recruiter's office. He was too busy to talk with me, so I left. On my way out of the building an Air Force recruiter popped out of his office and asked me in.

In September 1963 I found myself in Officer Training School at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Twenty years, three overseas tours and nine family moves later, I retired from the U.S. Air Force. I did not originally intend to spend that much time in the Air Force. Six months before my scheduled discharge in 1967 I received a letter from the U.S. Air Force Academy offering to send me back to school to obtain a Master's degree followed by a position as an instructor at the Academy. After I completed two years on the faculty there and a one-year stint in Vietnam, the Academy sent me back to grad school in 1972, where I received a doctorate and then returned to the Academy as an Associate Professor of German.

Following my retirement from the Air Force in 1983 as an intelligence officer, I moved to Southern California to work for Northrup Corporation. In 1984 I moved to Nebraska where I worked for ten years as a corporate executive at First Data Resources. The job required a lot of travel, which fed the bug and I could not get it out of my system even when I was at home. That impulse to wander even infected my wife. We always used our time off from work to go on camping trips or on cruises.

In 1994 we purchased an old farmhouse on Cape Cod that had been turned into a guest house. After renovation we operated it as a bed and breakfast, where we welcomed people from all over the world. It kept us very busy for seven years, restricting our heretofore nomadic lifestyle. Even though the inn prevented us from making forays overseas, it did bring the world to us in the form of guests from Great Britain, Ireland, Iceland, Germany, France, Italy, India, Japan and the Philippines.

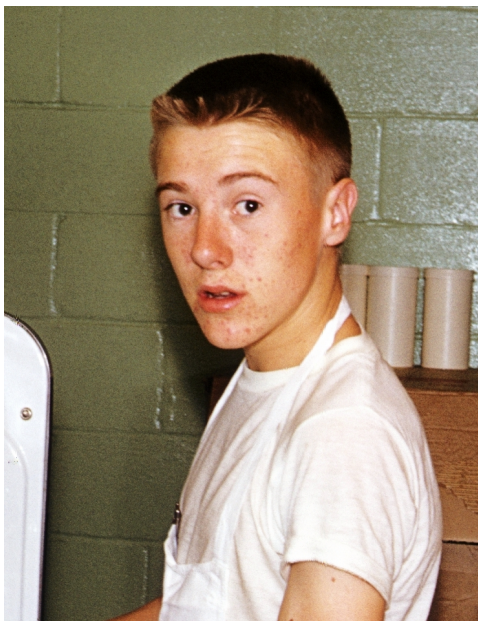
Soon we discovered that few guests would come in the winter, so we decided to close during the months of January and February. That allowed us to catch our breath and to complete any needed maintenance and it also gave us the opportunity to wander again.

In February 1999 I spent a month backpacking in Chile with our two sons, Brian and Sean, allowing the three of us to share our mutual desire to explore. You see they too are descendents of circus people. We hiked both ends and the middle of the country—Patagonia, Isla de Chiloe and the Atacama Desert. Although it is considered the driest desert in the world, it rained while we were there. It had not rained in over 20 years. It was an unforgettable treat to witness the people's reactions to something many had never experienced.

Since moving to New Mexico in 2003, our wanderlust has taken full rein. Our son goes so far as to claim that our house is the most expensive storage unit in New Mexico. Every year Cheryl and I plan at least one major camping trip in our motor home allowing us to head out like gypsies for up to two months roving around North America. And every year we undertake an inn-to-inn walk, which we have done in Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Cornwall, France, and Germany. It's in our blood.

In the end how can the great-grandson of immigrants and the grandson of circus people and an itinerant preacher not be filled with wanderlust? How can he not want to experience some thing or some place new or different? How can he and now his sons not be wanderers?

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Jack at Guerne farm market



Jack and Bobby, circa 1948.

# A Coal Miner's Kid Turned Professor

*by Dick Jensen*

During my seventy-five years I have lived an interesting life that bridged the gap between a blue collar family and a professional career in higher education. I was born into a coal mining family in Utah, went to college to become a teacher, earned a Ph.D., and taught at the university level for thirty years. I am financially comfortable, married to a beautiful, intelligent woman, have a talented daughter, and am the grandfather of two intelligent and creative young women. Yet, I still have questions about my life. At times I have felt as though I didn't deserve to have such a fulfilling life. I didn't understand those feelings but discovered that other individuals had similar concerns when I read a book called *Limbo* by Alfred Lubrano. In that book Lubrano details the results of interviews he held with individuals who grew up in working class families and then became successful professionals. Lubrano labels people like me as Straddlers, individuals who live between two worlds and are not comfortable in either.

I was raised in Spring Glen, a rural community of about 400 people two miles south of Helper (population 2,000) and five miles north of Price (population 8,000) in Carbon County, Utah. Carbon County was a unique part of Utah. Because of the plentiful jobs for miners and workers on the railroad the county attracted large numbers of immigrants from Great Britain, Eastern Europe, Greece, Italy, and Mexico. In a reflection of the diversity of its people, the county had a strong Catholic Church, a large Greek Orthodox community, and many Protestant groups in addition to members of the Mormon Church. The Mormon Church had less influence in Carbon County than any other region of the state. The county had many bars that offered liquor by the drink (in violation of state laws) and gambling. Prostitution was legal. Politics in the region were dominated by the United Mine Workers and the Democratic Party. Most of the rest of the state was strongly Republican.

My family members were not strong Mormons even though my ancestors were Mormon converts who came to Utah in 1866 from Sweden. After they arrived in Utah there was some sort of conflict with the Mormon Church and the family rejected Mormonism. My dad did not belong to any religion. My mother grew up in a Mormon family but was not active in the religion. My younger sister was a devout Mormon but the rest of us were not. I was active in the church during some periods of my life but I left completely in the 1960s. I became a Catholic when I married Carol. Several of my nieces and nephews have also become Catholics.

My father was a coal miner who quit school after the eighth grade. My mother graduated from South Emery High School, a small school in Ferron, a community about 40 miles south of Spring Glen. My mother was unable to go attend college, She was born into a poor family with nine children so there was no money for higher education. She grew up on a farm in Clawson,

Utah, but her father worked in the Hiawatha mine about 40 miles away. After graduating from high school she got a job doing house work and tending children in Hiawatha. My father was also working there. They were married a year after they met. I was the third of five children.

My father and uncles built our family home. My parents inherited money from my dad's eccentric bachelor uncle. They bought an empty house in one of the many mining camps in the area, tore it down, and used the materials to build our small, two-bedroom family home. A few years later a third bedroom was added in the basement for my two brothers and me. Although my father worked in the Castle Gate mine, we did not live in a mining camp. My family owned a small farm several miles from the mine. My older brother and I had to milk a cow and feed the pigs, chickens, and rabbits. In the summer we were responsible for the care of a large garden. All of us helped our mother can dozens of jars of fruits and vegetables. Our family never had much money but we always ate very well.

Miners believed in the value of education. Several of them said to me, "an education is important. It's the only thing they can't take away from you." Much of my desire to go to college grew out of this cultural belief in the value of education. Even though my parents were not readers and there were few books in our home, I have always loved to read. My family subscribed to the *Salt Lake Tribune* and *Life Magazine* which I read avidly. My junior high and high school both had libraries that I frequented. Most of my reading was done in our bedroom. I would lie on my bed with my head propped up on pillows. I would often get so involved in my book that I would refuse to be interrupted. If my parents tried to interrupt my reading I would ignore them or tell them to leave me alone. Eventually they gave up and let me read until I was finished.

At each stage of my education I was blessed to have teachers and mentors who saw potential in me. Many of my teachers had grown up in Carbon County and then returned to teach in the school district. I attended elementary school in Spring Glen. Most of my classmates' fathers either worked in the mines or on the railroad so we were from similar economic and social backgrounds. My first grade teacher, Miss Buchanan, had been my father's teacher. She encouraged my interest in learning but the teacher who had the most effect was my second and third grade teacher, Mrs. Hunter. She told my parents that I had a fine mind and she inspired me to work hard. Interestingly, she was the daughter of the governor of Utah. He was a Democrat who had been raised in Price.

As a kid I was always interested in baseball. When I was ten I began playing Little League baseball. I was a first baseman. When I was twelve I made the all-star team. Two years later I was a Pony League all-star. Baseball was the major sport among coal miners so it was an honor to be an all-star. At Helper Junior High and Carbon High School I was fortunate to have Floyd O'Neill, who grew up in Price, as a history teacher. He was a brilliant man who mentored several of us that he believed had potential. He encouraged us but he got very angry if we

disappointed him. O'Neill later became a professor at the University of Utah. In junior high I discovered competitive speech events. One of my teachers asked me to enter the speech contest between junior high schools (there were four in the county). I won a small medal (which I still have) for finishing in third place in extemporaneous speaking.

My interest in debate grew in high school. Neil Warren, who like me grew up in Spring Glen, was an outstanding debate coach and drama teacher. My partner and I did very well in competition throughout the state. In addition to debate, I was a member of the choir and had a singing role in the school musical. I often wondered what my family thought about my interest in debate and drama. In 1961 I turned eighteen so I was old enough to volunteer to work in the coal mine owned by the Mormon Church. Those eight hours in the mine were interesting but I remember thinking at the end of the shift, "Well, I have been in a coal mine and I never want to go back." In 1961 I enrolled at Carbon Junior College in Price. At that time an increasing number of students from working class families were able to attend college and become professionals. I had received a four-year scholarship from the state of Utah that paid my tuition. The state created the scholarships to encourage men to teach in the public schools.

Mr. Warren had moved to the college to be the debate coach and teach drama classes. My advisor and mentor was Charles Peterson, a history professor. I was on the debate team, had a major role in *The Taming of the Shrew*, and was a student body officer my sophomore year. During my freshman year I worked in a gas station and then got a job on KOAL radio during my sophomore year. In 1963 I moved to Weber State College. In my first months at Weber State I was active in drama and on the debate team but I quit both because I had to get a job to pay my college expenses. A friend on the debate team helped me obtain a job at KVOG radio

Before I left home my mother made it clear to me that she would be very disappointed if I ever forgot where I came from once I became successful. At the time I didn't understand her concern but she must have known of cases where people forgot their roots. I vowed that I would never forget mine. After graduating from Weber State I got a job teaching in my home county. I saw myself like the title character in the television show, *Welcome Back Kotter*. My goal was to return to my home town and teach kids like myself. I worked at East Carbon Junior High, a school located in a mining camp about 30 miles from where I grew up. It was a small school and I was the only English teacher. Two older teachers served as my mentors. In the fall of 1966 I moved to Kearns High School on the west side of the Salt Lake Valley. I was hired as the debate coach and speech teacher mainly because my background was similar to the students in the school—many of their parents worked in the large open pit copper mine in Bingham Canyon. In my three years at Kearns I built a very successful debate team.

In 1969 I entered the graduate program at the University of Arizona. I planned to earn an M.A. and teach at a community college. My mind was changed by two dynamic young

professors, Andrew King and Floyd Douglas Anderson. King directed my thesis on the labor radical William Dudley “Big Bill” Haywood. Both my thesis and dissertation were on labor unions as were many of my academic publications. My research was an attempt to bridge the gap between my academic and mining worlds. King and Anderson encouraged me to attend Indiana University for my Ph.D. At Indiana James R. Andrews was my advisor and directed my dissertation on the 1972 election in the United Mine Workers. I also met my wife at Indiana University. In 1974 I accepted a position as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Humboldt State University in Arcata, California. During my two years at Humboldt I was fortunate to have older professors who encouraged and mentored me. I also began my role as a mentor to students. My daughter, Mary Kay, was born during the time we lived in Arcata. In 1976 I accepted a tenure-track position at the University of New Mexico. I worked at UNM until 1992 when I was hired at UNLV. By 1992 I was a senior professor of Communication with a significant publication record. At UNLV I continued my research and expanded my work as a mentor. In recognition of my effectiveness in advising graduate students I received an award as the Outstanding Graduate Advisor in the university. I also served as an administrator for four years: Senior Advisor to the President and later Associate Dean of the Honors College.

I was fortunate that I chose a career that allowed me to continue reading. I often joked that I was paid to do just what I would do anyway. I cannot imagine a more fulfilling career. During my years as a teacher and professor I taught between eight and ten thousand students. My academic writings included a dozen books, more than fifty articles and book chapters, and many papers presented at academic conferences. I directed or served on more than one hundred thesis and dissertation committees. Additionally, I won awards for my teaching and scholarship and was elected to leadership positions in professional organizations. When I retired I vowed that I would spend a great deal of time reading. I have kept that vow. Much of my day is spent reading in a very comfortable chair in my office/guest bedroom. Most of the books that I read come from the library but I also buy books from Amazon and have a Kindle loaded with books. When I am reading I usually am able to focus on only one book at a time. Because I am a fast reader I often finish a book in two days. I read long books in 4 or 5 days.

Even though I was successful at each stage of my career, I have always considered myself a coal miner’s kid from Carbon County. I was fortunate that education allowed me a chance to escape from the world where I grew up. I had opportunities and I took them. A few years ago my mother said to me, “I’m proud of you for many things but I’m proudest that you never forgot where you came from.” I don’t think my family ever understood my life as a university professor but they took pride in my accomplishments. In many ways my life has been a confirmation of the hopes and dreams of my parents, my teachers, and my mentors. In turn I have encouraged many students to become successful in law, academics, and other professions. I feel blessed that I can look back on such a fulfilling life.



# How the Book Club Led Me To Enlightenment

*by Bob Simon*

For November 2017, I chose as my book club selection *Dharma Bums* by Jack Kerouac. During the meeting Tom Genoni asked “What is enlightenment?” I did not respond at the time but Tom’s question got me thinking, “How could I answer Tom’s question?”

Tom’s question made me assess my life’s experience with spiritual matters, which has led me to an answer to Tom’s question that I would like to share with the club.

Let me give you a brief history of how I came to answer Tom’s question.

Although both my parents were raised in the Jewish faith, neither of them were what I would consider devoutly religious. Although we observed the basic practices; attending temple on Friday nights, Sunday School religious education to be confirmed a Jew, and a bar mitzvah at age thirteen to become initiated into the faith, I noticed that my Dad and sometimes my Mother would attend a spiritual church affiliated with Science of Mind after they dropped us off at Sunday school.

They also were part of a group of free thinking intellectual friends in Fort Worth, with whom they partied and discussed ideas. I realized early on that my parents had broken from the belief and social parameters of strict Jewish practice.

My Dad made me an unwitting participant on his pursuits as a seeker of greater spiritual knowledge and mindfulness. He knew Norman Vincent Peale and advocated his teachings on the power of positive thinking, so I was imbued with Dad's strong commitment to the belief that by using positive thought one could control one’s destiny. Dad exposed the family to all areas of metaphysical and occult knowledge, including para physical phenomena, like flying saucers and alien encounters. For example, when my parents drove us to California in the summer of 1957 we visited both the newly opened Disneyland and the Rosicrucian Egyptian Temple in San Jose.

During college, Dad introduced me to Silva Mind Control and I began to understand that one could learn how to control one’s thoughts.

While at University of Texas I began reading occult/theosophical writers like Hesse, Castaneda, etc. But, the most interesting book I read was New Model of the Universe by P. D. Ouspensky, a writer, philosopher, esoteric mathematician, and follower of G. I. Gurdjieff. I also

read a bit of Ouspensky's The Fourth Way, so I became acquainted with the Theosophical Society.

After graduating from Law School I took a one year international student internship in Sweden in 1970. During that year I further explored the occult by borrowing books from Lucis Trust's Arcane School Library in London, England and became fairly familiar with the principals of Theosophy and the occult writings of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1972 when I returned to Fort Worth, Dad and I attended weekly meetings of proponents of the teachings of Edgar Cayce, the great para normal seer, where we discussed Cayce's teachings and held a short fifteen-minute meditation.

As I began to join other groups of young people my age who meditated, I began to realize that my Dad's search for a religion with a spiritual cosmology, such as Science of Mind was not the path I wanted to follow. Looking for manifestations of spirit in the physical world was an exercise that took one outside one's own consciousness and mind. Rather than seeking knowledge outside oneself, the key for me was to find a way to transform myself into a spiritually aware person through controlling my mind.

I became aware, perhaps through psychedelics, that I could induce a heightened energy level that opened awareness to a spiritual level of energy. I thought that through mediation I could achieve spiritual awareness without drugs.

At UT in the late 60's Bill Simmons, a friend from Highland Park who was one of the first hippies in Austin, gave me Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind by Shunryu Suzuki, which introduced me to zen and the Zen Center in San Francisco. In the early 70's I re-acquainted myself with one of my high school friends, David Chadwick, who had gone to San Francisco in the 60's and become an early student of Suzuki. While visiting him at his Mom's home for Christmas one year David invited me to spend some time at the Zen Center, "Why don't you come on out." (David has since become the primary biographer of Shunryu Suzuki)

So I did. I spent a week in the summer of 1976, living and meditating at the City Center zen monastery and visiting Green Gulch in Marin County.

I think I stayed again at the City Center in 1979 and ate a meal at the Zen Center's newly opened Greens Restaurant in Fort Mason Center, one of the first gourmet vegetarian restaurants in the U.S.

I have always loved good food. My mother founded one of the first cooking schools in Texas in the 1960's. She was acquainted with many of her generation's great gourmet cooking teachers, Julie Dannenbaum in Philadelphia, Helen Corbitt at Neiman-Marcus in Dallas, Julia

Child in Boston, and most particularly Julia's co-author of Mastering the Art of French Cooking, Simone Beck, whose compound Simone shared with Julia Child in Provence, mother visited several times.

How many circular connections there are in life. Deborah Madison, the famous vegetarian chef and cookbook writer, who now lives in Santa Fe, was a zen student at City Center for eighteen years and the first chef at Greens.

I practiced law and meditation in Albuquerque after I moved to New Mexico in 1982. I soon joined Rev. Brian Taylor's contemplative prayer group at [St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church](#), who practiced a very pure form of zen practice for years, including weekend sessions in a zendo he built in his back yard. I loved sitting with his group for ten or fifteen years until he decided to turn his practice toward a more church sanctioned and oriented training for Christians who wanted to teach contemplative prayer. At that point Kris Johnson, who was a student of the Zen teacher Joko Beck, and I started a sitting group of three or four at the Quaker Meeting Hall. After another fifteen years Kris and the others retired, but I still sit with one other person there every week.

So, back to Tom's question. I thought about Kerouac's enlightenment breakthrough he described in Dharma Bums, sitting in the woods behind his mother's house during his period of intense contact with zen in 1956. Kerouac's energized awareness that all things are united in time and space hit me as the enlightenment experience of the Buddha and also connected to Ouspensky's description of dimensions. It occurred to me that there was a simultaneity between Ouspensky's third and fourth dimension or the time space continuum and the Buddha's four noble truths:

Wikipedia states: The Four Noble Truths comprise the essence of Buddha's teachings. They are the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the end of suffering, and the truth of the path that leads to the end of suffering.

This insight seems to answer Tom's question. The "suffering" the Buddha described is in reality the confusion and anxiety caused by simultaneously living in both the third and fourth dimension that Ouspensky described. The Buddha's first and second noble truths.

Therefore, enlightenment or the end of suffering in Buddhism is the ability to bring into balance the awareness that we exist in the third "here and now" dimension" while simultaneously traveling through the fourth dimension "the time space continuum".

This is an essential principle of Buddhism; being in the moment, while everything is constantly changing.

We touch enlightenment when we become aware that our consciousness/mind is physical and spiritual energy in this moment of infinite time and space, as Kerouac described it. By increasing our energy, we can achieve linkage of physical and spiritual awareness. I have achieved this dual awareness or enlightenment momentarily by regulating my breathing to slow my heart rate and observing my thoughts through proper posture in a meditative state of mind. The result is a calmness I call "peace of mind", which I am convinced everyone can achieve. The Buddha confirms it. The recognition of and path to enlightenment are his third and fourth noble truths.

To put it in the context of European thought, **"the human Mind is a part of the infinite intellect of God."** - *Baruch Spinoza*

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1957: Bob Simon, age 11

# Philately Metamorphosis

by Mike Blackledge

During the early days of December 2016, I received an envelope in the mail that had an immediate reaction within my remaining memory neurons. *"No cookie nibbled by a French novelist could send one into the past more suddenly..."*<sup>i</sup>

I'm sure there was a Christmas card somewhere inside that envelope, but that was not the source of my reaction – I was struck by the bright red envelope itself, apparently sent through the regular United States Postal Service but with an array of seven or eight commemorative stamps. Old stamps. Real stamps. No "Forever" stamps here, these stamps were marked with actual U.S. postage of 6¢, 8¢, 10¢, yes even **'FOUR CENTS.'** The lick 'em and stick 'em variety.



The four center was the oldest and the one that most attracted me: the gray 4¢ Army stamp featured portraits of General Robert E. Lee and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, with Stratford Hall in the center. I had owned this stamp. I almost certainly still did – hinged and mounted in an album in a box on the top shelf of my guest room closet. From December 1936 to May 1937, the United States Post Office issued a series of ten commemorative postage stamps depicting war heroes from the Army and Navy. This stamp represents one of the few instances in which military leaders who bore arms against the United States have been featured on a U.S. postage stamp.

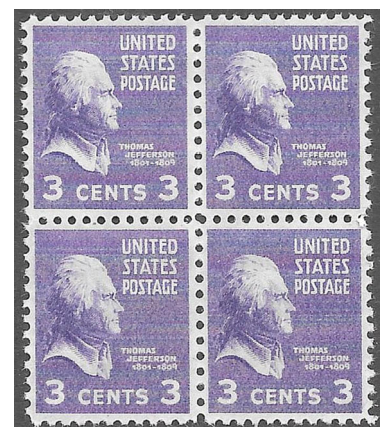
Heck, I might even have a First Day Cover featuring this stamp. A first day of issue cover or first day cover is a postage stamp on an envelope postmarked on the first day the stamp is authorized for use within the country. There is a shoebox of First Day Covers on that shelf as well.

Much of the better parts of my youth revolved around building that collection, beginning with the introduction and encouragement of Aunt Kathie that eased me into this hobby. Technically, Kathryn Forrant Crotty would have been my 'Great-Aunt Kathie' as she was the only surviving sibling of my mother's mother. And as you read this, your non-Massachusetts brain almost certainly subvocalized "Aunt" as **"ant"** – but Mother was born in Salem, Mass (with the witches, my father would remind us) and it was always pronounced **"ont"** in my childhood – along with "baath" and "paath" – the long "ah" never the harsh **"A"**.

As to which came first, my interest in stamps or Aunt Kathie's encouragement, that is hard to say. But for a 10 or 11-year old boy in the 1950s in Houston, for an envelope to show up in the mail addressed specifically to him, that was huge. It was always obvious that the envelope came from Aunt Kathie, as her spindly script was captured in a distinctive green ink – we are talking real ink here, nothing typed or printed – of a brightness I have never seen before or since. My mother's family was Irish-Catholic, so I thought of it as Irish Green. Aunt Kathie was the most important person in my mother's life before she met my father.<sup>ii</sup>

Soon I began collecting my own stamps – I would tear off the corner of the envelope, run some warm water into a shallow cereal bowl, carefully submerge the corner, and after a time, the stamp would float right off. Then I would discard the soggy envelope and lay the stamps, face down, on some clean paper until they dried. Then into my album or my shoebox.

Postage in the 1950s stayed constant at 3¢ for years, and I subsequently ended up saving many, certainly hundreds, of the standard 3¢ postage stamp most everyone used. The books on collecting said that



"duplicates are important because you can trade those to other collectors for stamps you need." I must have been cheap ('frugal') from a young age – one of my father's oft-repeated aphorisms was "Save your money!" So I saved those stamps. But how many of these 3¢ duplicates should I keep? More and more. Perhaps more would be worth something. But of the few collectors I knew, they all had plenty of those 3¢ duplicates.

Soon I wanted to expand my collection, and I knew that would cost money. My parents 'awarded' me \$3 a month allowance for taking out the trash and doing my homework. Not enough to add much to my collection. I didn't have many ways to earn money. One that was constant was touch-typing. My mother insisted on certain abilities for her children, and among these were reading, swimming, and touch-typing. We didn't get paid to read or to swim, but touch-typing was a gold mine. Just for typing and using all of one's fingers without looking at the keys. Mother had purchased a set of pastel gray caps to cover the major keys of the keyboard, and had a list of lessons to go through to memorize and practice the art of touch-typing. I would sit there and type out: "fjdk fjdk fjdk fjdk" For every error-free line I created on the typewriter paper, I earned 1¢. Cash.

The other primary method of earning money was selling soft drinks at Rice Stadium. The Owls were in the Southwest Conference and that was big. On home game days, about an hour before kick-off time I would walk the mile to the stadium, and find the vendor in charge of selling soft drinks. For \$1, you purchased a bucket of 12 bottles of Coke or Seven-up, and the vendor would dump in some ice before I departed and add a stack of paper cups. Then I would trudge off with the bucket, climb up the cement stairs of the stadium, yelling: "**Soda-water! Get yer Ice Cold Soda-water!**" As the Houston heat and humidity wore on, eventually some fan would say, "Soda-water! Boy! Over here!" It was 10¢ a drink, and with the bottle-opener tied to the bucket handle, you would pop off the bottle cap, get a little ice from the bucket, pour the coke into the cup, let it settle, pour the rest, and pass it down the row. The fan would pass the money, usually a dollar bill, and you would make change and pass it back. When you sold all your drinks, you had cleared 20 cents profit, and you'd head back for a refill of your bucket and start over. Soon I was able to carry two buckets, one in each hand, and slash my turnaround time. Other guys would tell me to climb up to the top of the stadium where all the drunks congregated; the drunks were big tippers, as they wanted the 7-up as a mixer for their alcohol.

That was good money, maybe \$10 a game, but there were only five or so home games each year. As I would walk the mile or two to the stadium, I would always be envious of the homes that were close to the stadium, with signs in their driveway, "Park here for \$5!" What an easy way to earn \$5!

Once I had some money saved up, I would choose a Saturday and head off to the stamp dealers downtown. My mother never learned to drive, but another attribute that she taught her children was how to use public transportation, wherever we lived. Before Houston, my sisters and I would take the electric trolley to the Indianapolis Athletic Club downtown, where we kids swam our mile or half-mile (depending on our age) to complete our workout. In Houston, I would walk to the bus stop on Greenbriar and then for 10 cents take the bus downtown and get off on Capitol Street and the Continental Bank Building.<sup>iii</sup>

I would take the elevator up to the third floor and enter the tiny 321 office of the Mitula Stamp and Coin Co. It was probably 10' x 12', strictly a one-person operation. Old Man Mitula would be sitting, bent over behind a large desk with a glass sheet on the top, through which you could view a plethora of stamps, just a beautiful display.

He would always ask, "What do you collect? U.S.? Foreign?" This question always confused me, and I would usually stammer, "Ah... well, mainly U.S., some foreign." And he'd say, "OK, sit down." And he would start bringing out different stamps and often a few specialty items. He would pull them out with stamp tongs and lay them on the glass in front of me. Whenever he would select for me a stamp from underneath his glass display surface, I would always feel guilty. I couldn't believe he was willing to sell me a stamp from his own collection. But I kept my mouth shut, not wanting to

discourage him, and got my money out before he changed his mind. I always walked out with great additions for my collection.

Then, in 1953, he wanted to sell me a little album. I had a big stamp album by then, but he explained this was a specialty album. It was about 5" x 8", covered in blue cloth, created specifically for Queen Elizabeth's coronation in June. He said this would be an important addition, so I got my money out and bought the empty album. Then I started buying Queen Elizabeth coronation stamps. I kept adding them to the album, but I didn't like them as much as Old Man Mitula liked to sell them to me. There was little difference between the designs. Each was issued for a different member of the Commonwealth – Aden, Abyssinia, Australia, etc. – but they were all essentially the same stamp, with only a change of denomination, colony name, and sometimes (not often) color. It went on and on, and I never did fill that little album. But I was impressed with the size of the Commonwealth.

By the time I was in high school, I considered myself a sophisticated stamp collector – I had attended numerous stamp shows, and had fielded (wrongly) the most difficult question posed to me in Life, by a dealer at one of those shows: "Do you soak the stamp off the paper, or the paper off the stamp?" "uh ... the stamp off the paper?" I stammered. "WRONG!" boomed the dealer – "You need to get ALL the paper off the STAMP!"

I knew Aunt Kathie was getting elderly, and since it was all about me, I finally worked up my courage to write a letter, asking if she would consider bequeathing her collection to me some day. I didn't get a reply, and tried again. Finally, in the mail arrived a small packet with an even smaller stamp album – it was one of those H.E. Harris paper albums that beginners get for free. Inside was a smattering of stamps, some of which were even scotch-taped to the page. I was embarrassed. How could this be Aunt Kathie's collection? Could she have sent all those First Day Covers to me, and never built a collection herself? Aunt Kathie wasn't a 'real' collector?

I never met Aunt Kathie, never spoke to her on the phone. She lived well into my teen years, whereas her sister, my mother's mother, had died the year before I was born.

Later in Life when I got into genealogy and my mother was no longer alive, I found her mother's birth records, and birth records for Aunt Kathie. Surprisingly, each of them had been born a twin! During one disastrous winter (1895-1896) on the Glancy farm, five of the seven children had died from what my mother had called "the black diphtheria." The next Spring, my great-great-grandfather Patrick Glancy was killed in a farm accident, and my great-great-grandmother was forced to put the farm up for auction and move her two surviving daughters into a small duplex in the town of Ware. My mother took my father there only once, and my father came back to spit dismissively, "It was nothing but a little Irish shanty."

Looking back today, there were many Life Lessons that I learned from those days and from stamp collecting. Often while working genealogy I have thought how like stamp collecting it is, only with collecting people. Rather than placing a stamp into an album where it belongs, you place the name/birth/death event into your database. Filling in the blanks of Life still provides pleasure.

I had learned about the value of money and converting it to a collection "of great value." One interesting comparison that comes to me now is that Old Man Mitula's stamp office was very similar in size and disarray to Adm. Rickover's small crowded office when I went for my interview in the Navy Annex just a decade later. Albin Joseph "Joe" Mitula was born in 1896 (the same year my father was born and my mother's mother lost her siblings) and was buried in Houston in 1972. Hyman Rickover was younger than both of them (b. 1900) and outlived them both (1986). I also found other Mitula Co. customers and learned Joe Mitula was somewhat famous for accumulating a million 1950-D nickels during those 1950s.

Now if you'll excuse me, I want to take one more look at that envelope.

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<sup>i</sup> from *The Lanyard* by Billy Collins.

<sup>ii</sup> July 25, 1931, Tokyo - Dear Kathie: First I will tell you about the trip coming over. I met the nicest Lieutenant in the Navy. He has just come from teaching two years at Annapolis Naval Academy and will have three years duty in China. Well, we were together all during the trip and he sure is a peach. Very good looking and as nice as he is good looking... and I was asked to spend my vacation in Shanghai by Allan. I have never known anyone as nice as he is and I'm not going to risk any chance of losing developing this friendship just because my insurance premiums are so high I won't have enough saved by the time summer comes.

P.S. . . . Don't tell Mother about the Lieutenant as she will put it in the news.

<sup>iii</sup> The Continental Bank Building at 220 Main Street (Main and Congress) in Houston was built in 1911 as the Union National Bank Building. Today the building is called Hotel Icon under Houston's "Historic District", but it was also known as the Pan American Bank Building and the Natural Gas Building. Mitula's first office was in the upper floors of that address. See FindAGrave.com memorial 143955908.



# LTBC Memoir: The Tyranny of Numbers

*by Robert Easterling*

**Introduction:** In 1995 I came across *The Tyranny of Numbers*, by Nicholas Eberstadt. The book (on government statistics) impressed me enough that I circulated comments to the Reliability and Quality groups in Sandia. Mike Blackledge was on that distribution and he called and told me about the Last Thursday Book Club and wondered if I'd like to have *Tyranny* read and discussed by the club. I said I'm not sure whether this is the right sort of book, but I'd be interested in attending a club meeting to see what it's like. I soon joined the LTBC, but when it was one of my early turns to select a book, to my everlasting shaming, I picked *Bluefeather Fellini in the Sacred Realm*, by Max Evans. I never subjected my LTBC brothers to *Tyranny*, until now, if they are so inclined.

I say with deep gratitude that *Tyranny of Numbers* got me into the LTBC and 23 years of reading that I would never have come close to on my own. I'll return the favor to some degree, I hope, by summarizing the book for current LTBCers and applying its lessons to current instances of "mismeasurement and misrule."

**The Tyranny of Numbers:** Author's Introduction/Theme: ... "The facts and figures that modern governments amass may well appear dull, but it is my contention that they are not essentially harmless. To the contrary: in this collection of studies I attempt to demonstrate that ordinary people around the world routinely suffer injury through the agency of these selfsame dull statistics..... . Throughout the studies in this collection, cold statistics and purportedly value-neutral numbers seem to lead to moral issues in policy. .... *When all is said and done, there can be no substitute for moral reasoning in human affairs.*" (my emphasis).

When I first read this, I don't think that I'd thought much about how statistical and moral issues can be intertwined. Now I think about it all the time.

Eberstadt has continued his work in this area and in 2012 collected his findings in a small book titled *A Nation of Takers (America's Entitlement Epidemic)*. To Eberstadt's credit, the book has a section, Dissenting Points of View, that features commentary by two analysts who disagree with him. For example, one dissenter argues that wealthy Americans get government relief via the home mortgage tax deduction, and thus are big-time *Takers*. Dollarwise, they cost more, say, than people who receive Social Security disability payments. Ref. on-line: *aei.org*

**VA Hospital Wait-Times:** The wait time for a veteran to see a doctor is an important element in the medical care of veterans. To track this characteristic, waiting-time data are collected and reported. To encourage prompt care, VA management told their hospital administrators: the size of your annual bonus depends on the average patient-wait-time at your hospital.

Data-based incentives and actions should be a good thing, don't you think? What happened, though, is that some administrators and staff faked the data. (Dilbert once remarked, "I didn't know data could be real.")

The late quality guru, W. Edwards Deming, would not be surprised by the VA's use/abuse of data. He preached 14 rules for management. Number 11: Eliminate numerical quotas for the workforce and numerical goals for management.

His reason: Numerical quotas and goals can distort a system, rather than improve it. It can be easier to fake the data than to fix the flaws in a system. As Eberstadt says, *moral* reasoning is required; not just Numbers.

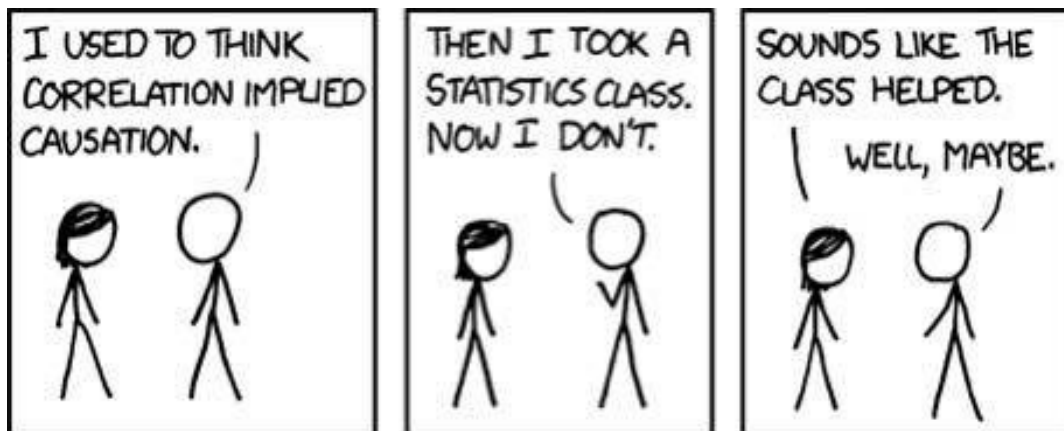
**Disparate Impact:** Violence in schools is a widespread concern. The Obama Administration's Secretary of Education sent "Dear Colleague" letters to school administrators, nationwide, requiring schools to report various acts of violence – bullying, physical attacks, destruction or theft of property, ... and the actions taken: suspension, expulsion, arrest, ... .

Schools were directed to report the occurrence rates of violent acts and punitive actions by race, on a per capita basis. Under the assumption that the propensity of acts of school violence is constant across races one would expect equal occurrence rates among races (allowing for statistical uncertainty) and similarly, equal punishment rates across races for the same acts of violence. If the observed rates differed by more than could be attributed to the inherent statistical uncertainty in these measurements, schools were told their disciplinary program has a *disparate impact* on students from different races. To the Dept. of Education if, say, black students had higher reported rates of violent acts than white students such an outcome is indicative (proof) of teacher and administrator *racism*, which no teacher, principal, or superintendent wants to hear. Ref: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3104221](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3104221)

The Broward County, Florida remedy: they quit reporting violent acts and disciplinary actions. They canceled disciplinary actions and offered counseling as an alternative. No disparate impact here. The reported rates are all zero. Nothing to see. Keep moving.

Meanwhile a ticking time bomb was not heard. Reluctance by school or law enforcement agencies to follow-up on reported violent acts and threats by the (Hispanic-surnamed) Florida shooter was, some have conjectured, at least in part due to a desire to avoid "bad numbers." Moral reasoning?

Correlation vs. Causation.



Statistics means never having to say you're certain.

**Sub-Prime Lending:** Government data show that home-owners tend to have a better "quality of life" than do non-owners, in terms of characteristics such as education, employment, income, crime, .... Thus, quality of life and home ownership are *correlated*. Politicians of both parties said: We need to increase the number of home-owners. That will make life better for more people (*causation*). How? Make it easier to buy a house. Result: mortgages that could not be paid, abandoned houses, deflated housing bubble. Moral reasoning? No. Moral preening? Yes.

Sunday May 14, 2017

**DILBERT**



**Global Warming:** About 15 years ago at a statistical conference, I attended a session on climate modeling. One presentation started with data – a graph spanning about ten years of data that straddled parts of the 1980s and 1990s (as I recall). The plotted data were annual carbon emissions and average temperatures over that period. The plot showed that both carbon emissions and measured temperatures increased over that interval (correlation and/or causation?).

After the presentation, I said to the speaker: We've now got about five years of data past the end of the data you had when you fitted your model. Have you compared your predictions to what actually happened, emission- and temperature-wise, these last five years? His answer was, "No, our sponsors don't seem interested in that."

I was shocked, shocked! – then outraged. I thought this was a terrible science-denying answer – it betrays the Scientific Method: conjecture/hypothesis, experiment:data, analyses, updated hypotheses (theory/models), more experiments, ...; repeat cycle, ... .

"**The Butterfield Effect**" is named in honor of ace New York Times crime reporter Fox Butterfield, the intrepid analyst responsible for such brilliantly headlined stories as "More Inmates, Despite Drop In Crime," and "Number in Prison Grows Despite Crime Reduction," not to mention the poetic 1997 header, "Crime Keeps on Falling, but Prisons Keep on Filling."

Mr. Butterfield is truly perplexed at what he calls the "paradox" of more criminals in prison coinciding with less crime in neighborhoods. An observation that might appear obvious to an 8th grader (crooks + jail = fewer crimes) is simply beyond his grasp. Butterfield of the Times is the poster boy for the greatest conundrum facing the American Left today: How do you explain to people who just don't get it that the problem is they just don't get it? (ref. Michael Graham. <http://www.jewishworldreview.com/1204/graham120204.asp>)

**Some personal history:** how/why I became a statistician: After one year at Northern Oklahoma (Junior) College in my home town of Tonkawa, OK, I enrolled at Oklahoma State University in 1961. I was on a work-scholarship and assigned to the Statistical Laboratory. This was the consulting arm of the Stat Dept. and involved department professors, graduate students, and primitive computing resources, working with researchers throughout OSU, with an emphasis on agriculture.

My job was primarily taking stacks of IBM punch-cards to the computer lab where they were fed to the room-size computer to carry out various statistical analyses. I'd then take the printouts to the consulting professor and sit in on the discussions with the researchers. Thus I was exposed to the use of statistical methods before I had taken any courses on these methods. That pretty well set my career path.

In the summers of 1963 and '64 I worked at the Bendix plant in Kansas City. Bendix was a contractor for Sandia, so I also learned a bit about Albuquerque and Sandia.

I met and wed Judy Cross, a secretary at Bendix. We moved to Stillwater, OK, where I finished my graduate work. Judy also had met some Sandia engineers and liked what she heard about Albuquerque and Sandia, so it was an easy transition for us to make in 1967 – to live in Albuquerque, raise two sons there, and both work at Sandia.

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Other than my gifts of *Bluefeather Fellini* and *Magister Ludi* to the LTBC, here's what I immodestly see as my "legacy."

1. The quotation, Archie Bunker to his son-in-law:

*"Don't give me no stastistics (sic), Meathead. I want facts!"*

I heard Archie say this, or something very close to it, on a late-night rerun of *All in the Family*. I made it my e-mail signature line and used it in my teaching and writing.

Archie, as often the case, was inadvertently profound. He expressed and exposed a problem that statisticians have. We tend to focus on analysis details (P-values, confidence limits, ..., i.e., 'stastistics'), but we don't communicate well the facts revealed by the analysis in the language of our collaborators or sponsors.



2. In the 1960s and '70s I published a few papers and made some conference presentations. That bit of visibility, thank you, Sandia, led to an invitation to become an Associate Editor of the applied statistics journal, *Technometrics*. I enjoyed reviewing submitted papers and sending

back recommendations to the Editor and suggestions to the author on how to improve the paper.

I became Editor from 1981-83. I took seriously the requirement that papers published in *Technometrics* should be “demonstrably applicable to real problems in engineering and the physical sciences.” Many submissions weren’t, in my view, and the journal became markedly thinner during my editorship. One author, the editor of another journal, replied to my rejection letter, saying: “I know how it is to be an editor and I wonder if you accidentally sent me the wrong form letter.” I wrote back: “No, I wonder if you accidentally submitted your paper to the wrong journal.” I always tried to stay out of his line of sight at statistical meetings.

Years later I learned that some unhappy authors tried to get me fired. Fortunately, the journal’s Management Committee recognized and supported what I was doing for the journal and its readers.

3. Article: *Passion-Driven Statistics*: After retiring from Sandia I did some itinerant university teaching for a quarter or semester (from Albuquerque to Ann Arbor, Auckland, Abilene, and Monterey). Too many textbooks I encountered epitomized Archie’s comment. Examples and homework problems were of the format: here’s some data, turn the crank, calculate a bunch of numbers; next problem. I wrote an article in *The American Statistician* (2010) with the above title. The basic theme was that our clients and collaborators are passionate about their interests and what they can learn about them from statistical studies. That passion shapes the study and focuses the analysis. Statistics is a team sport. From the abstract:

... one of the statistics profession’s responsibilities is to be “the first quantitative trainers of future generations of scientists, engineers, policy makers, etc.” (quoting from an article by the Chairman of the Harvard Statistics Dept.) ... Evidence suggests we have not met this challenge. In fact, our traditional Stat101 courses and texts can poison the statistical well for the people who become our potential sponsors and collaborators. We need to do more than teach ‘methods.’ We need to show from the first day and throughout the Stat101 experience that our methods exist to help people learn interesting things about issues and topics *they* are passionate about. This message pertains to the rising generations of professionals and the citizenry at large and it applies to statisticians .... [excerpt from abstract, ‘Passion-Driven Statistics’]

4. Textbook: *Fundamentals of Statistical Experimental Design and Analysis*, (Wiley 2015). After my university teaching came to a close, I converted my class notes to a textbook that I hope embodies my philosophy on how statistics should be taught. This reviewer got the message:

This book...will be valuable for anyone reading a science subject, engineering, management, or medicine. ... (Easterling) keeps the tone light throughout, so the book is easier reading than I expected. ... How I wish I had known all this stuff decades ago. (8 Sep-tember 2016, Bernadette Lugner (amazon.co.uk))

5. Tuzigoot Travel Blog (tuzigoot.blogspot.com): Travel reports, 2006-2016, mostly by motor-home. To be converted to digital files and printed reports for our kids and grandkids.

6. Books for Kids: The last two years at Christmas I have sent Susie’s and my six kids LTBC books that affected me and that they might enjoy:

- *Querencia*, by Stephen Bodio: “*Learn to Live. Learn to Love. Read this book.*” The best writing about New Mexico that I’ve read.
- *Being Mortal*, by Atul Gawande: Taking care of old people.

‘Nuff Said.

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The young statistician: Spring 1954, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Washington School, Tonkawa, OK.

# Spare Parts

## *The Advantages of Being Naturally Cloned*

*by Ken Gillen*

Way before ultrasound was available, my very pregnant mother was told by her obstetrician that he felt two heads, but my mother figured he had felt a head and a butt. The doctor was right and mom delivered me and my identical twin Keith. We argue to this day as to who was the head and who was the butt. Having an identical twin leads to many advantages, some obvious (having a playmate growing up), some less obvious ("I didn't do that but I have an identical twin brother"). One of our favorite tricks was for one of us to go to a movie, then leave at the end, telling the usher that we had to make a phone call at an outside phone booth and would return shortly with the other twin returning for the second showing of the movie. As we approach our senior years, we jokingly introduce each other as our spare parts.

We grew up in Cleveland, Ohio and moved to the slums of Beverly Hills, California in 1954. Contrary to the image expected of such a supposedly upscale move, my parents sold their Cleveland house for \$25,000 and bought the Beverly Hills "slum" property for \$22,000. Fast forward 64 years and Zillow estimates that the Cleveland house is now worth \$176,000, whereas the Beverly Hills slum property is worth \$2,675,000.

In my junior year at Beverly Hills High, I joined the chess team and thought I was pretty good until the end of the school year, when I played at the Los Angeles City High School Tournament. After 4 games, my record was 3-1 and I was matched with a guy who was 4-0. We played an opening I had memorized out to 20 or so moves from a chess book, but every time I made a move, my opponent quickly responded, implying that he also seemed to know the variation I was following. Finally I reached my last move from the book which stated that the position was even, so I offered a draw. After he declined the offer, I was on my own and after another couple of moves, he told me I had blundered, so I offered some totally made up BS about my move being used by Alekhine against Capablanca in Madrid in 1927. My opponent laughed hysterically and then destroyed me over the next several moves. Later I learned that my opponent, Steve Sholomson, had come in 3<sup>rd</sup> at the 1957 U. S. Junior Championships (Bobby Fischer came in 1<sup>st</sup>).

Throughout high school, my brother and I took somewhat separate paths with differing groups of friends. Although both of us were wizards in math and science, he and his friends worked much harder in English classes. During the junior year, they did such things as memorizing words in the dictionary while preparing for the SAT exams; meanwhile, my friends and I were into juvenile delinquency. Bottom line-- based on his better grades in English and Social Studies classes and higher SAT scores, he went on to Cal Tech while I went on to Cal-Berkeley. After my undergraduate studies, I married the love of my life, Diane, and joined



unmarried Keith at the University of Wisconsin where we both received PhDs in Chemistry. I then spent 2 years at Bell Labs followed by 30 years at Sandia National Laboratories, where I spent most of my career developing models, knowledge and new techniques for understanding aging of polymeric materials. I became a Distinguished Member of the Technical Staff (a DimShits according to one of my car-pool mates who had the same title). Keith ended up doing chemical research at Stanford Research Institute, which led to another interesting advantage. During merit review at Sandia, my Department Manager looked up his people on "Citation Index" which lists authors who reference other authors' papers in their publications. Because both Keith and I published in Chemistry journals and the listings show citations based on initials for first and middle names, both his citations and mine were listed under K.T. Gillen, so my manager was always impressed by how many people cited "my work."

During my time at Sandia, I became known as the go-to person for creating acronyms. One example involved my development of a very simple and superior method to evaluate the long-term integrity of o-rings that seal the interior of nitrogen filled weapons from the ingress of degrading oxygen and water vapor by monitoring the argon ingress (0.93% of air but inert). My acronym "PACER" stood for Probing Argon Concentration to Evaluate Reliability. I coined "SCRAPS" for Sandia's Cable Repository for Aged Polymer Samples. My favorite was "PISSED" which stood for Preparation of Incrementally Stepped Solutions for Evaluating Density. Although I retired from Sandia in 2004 just before joining LTBC, I continue to write papers, give presentations and consult on polymer degradation topics, both alone and with Sandia Labs co-authors. I published over 110 refereed technical papers, many invited book chapters and review articles, gave numerous invited talks and twice taught part of an Institute of Materials Science sponsored intensive two-day short course on "Polymer Degradation and Stabilization." I co-edited an ACS Advances in Chemistry Series 249 book on Polymer Durability, served on several IEEE and IEC committees and was the North American Editor for the Elsevier Journal "Polymer Degradation and Stability" from 1999 to 2006. In 2015, I received my first and only "Best Paper Award" for a paper presented at the October, 2014 ACS Rubber Division International Meeting. After the paper was published in an English-language journal, a request by a German publisher led to its translation to German for publication in two different German journals.

My wife and I have always enjoyed travel and spent our honeymoon traveling through Europe and the Middle East for nine months. Some of our most memorable and favorite trips over the years were to Turkey, China, Thailand, Vietnam and Machu Picchu. My current bucket list includes Australia, New Zealand, The Taj Mahal and, if some of my penny stocks work out, a \$200,000 trip to low earth orbit. We also cherish Northern California visits with our wonderful family members- brother and wife, two daughters, their husbands and four grandchildren (ages from 20 to 2). On one tough but humorous trip many years ago, I backpacked to Phantom Ranch deep in the Grand Canyon with a friend, Mark Percival, who brought along a guitar. After several groups coming up the South Kaibab Trail (4800 foot drop) said "You're carrying a

guitar into the Canyon?”, we came up with the following response: “Yep, when you cross paths with our bass player, let him know how far ahead we are.”

Besides travel, LTBC and continuing to do science, I have been involved for the past 7 years doing volunteer taxes as an AARP Tax Aide for mostly low income senior taxpayers. This has led to knowledge concerning an unfair situation in New Mexico tax law which I am attempting to work with the Legislature to resolve (good luck you say!). As an example, a senior couple of moderate income that receives \$5000 in capital gains might expect their New Mexico taxable income to increase by \$2500 since half of capital gains are supposedly tax-free in New Mexico. In fact, in certain situations, their New Mexico taxable income can go up by as much as \$16,600!

I joined LTBC in 2004 after I partially retired when I heard that they put out food and delicious desserts at their evening meetings. I’m really into good food and especially desserts. For example, in high school, I was on the track team as a junior where my main event turned out to be helping to put up the hurdles for hurdle events. The track coach was also the football coach and told me to put on weight over the summer so I could help the football team in the fall (I knew goal posts did not have to be erected so I assumed he wanted me to actually play). So over the summer, I ate tremendous quantities of food, especially desserts, and gained about 30 lb. When I waddled into the first August practice session, the coach laughed hysterically at my increased blubber and I learned in my naivety that he wanted me to gain muscle not fat. With my football dreams vanquished, I decided to quickly lose the weight and used the knowledge I gained from junior chemistry to calculate that melting ~0.37 lb of ice from -10C to body temperature required ~3500 calories, equivalent to losing 1 lb of fat. After sucking on pounds of ice over several days with no measurable effect, a friend pointed out that food calories were really kilo calories so I was off by a factor of 1000. When I subsequently learned that significant chewing on celery before swallowing gives negative calories, I spent several days chewing on and then swallowing celery, but diarrhea soon ended that experiment.

My most memorable food experience was in my early years at Sandia when a co-worker and I submitted Abstracts for a paper we wanted to present at a conference in Paris about work we were doing on safety issues in nuclear plants. After submission of our Abstracts, we received a communication from French workers unknown to us who asked if we would like to extend our stay and visit a nuclear power plant in Lyon for scientific discussions. After getting permission from our sponsor, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, we accepted their invitation and they made arrangements for our post-conference travel by train to Lyon with three additional American participants. When we got off the train in Lyon about an hour behind schedule, there was a chauffeur waiting for us and he drove us to the nuclear plant in a Mercedes limousine. The plant had a huge banner outside stating “Welcome to the American Delegation” and an American flag joining the French flag on flagpoles. We were escorted to the control room of the plant for a 10 minute overview after which our host looked at his watch and said we had to leave for lunch. They then took us to a 4 star Michelin restaurant where around 20 workers

from the plant conveniently joined the “American Delegation” for a 6 course, 3.5 hour lunch that was the best food I have ever had in my life. After the meal, they took us quickly back to the train station so we wouldn’t miss our connection. Our main discussion on the way to our next stop was how we would describe the day in our trip report and how clever for the French to do this sort of thing.

A less delightful food experience occurred when I once hosted an important guest from The National Bureau of Standards and drove him plus my Department Chairman and Vice President to lunch. I suggested a Chinese buffet that I had previously enjoyed. When we arrived, the parking lot was empty and a sign was on the door. The guest jumped out and read the sign which stated that the restaurant was closed by the Department of Health. What a great way to impress a guest and my bosses!

So when I joined the Last Thursday Book Club, I was looking forward to the food and especially the desserts. At one of my first few meetings, Rob Easterling hosted the meeting at a museum that I couldn’t locate. No one in the area had ever heard of it. Finally, craving the dessert I was clearly going to miss, I went into a nearby bakery and tried again to find out the museum’s location. Again no luck but, since I was in a bakery, I assuaged my disappointment by partaking of several desserts, followed by later chewing on some celery.

I’ve enjoyed being in LTBC for the last 15 years and I had the good fortune of joining just after the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary where the required reading was James Joyce’s Ulysses. Lucky me!



*(left to right): Ken and Keith ... or Keith and Ken ... or ... oh, hell!*

# A Few Anecdotes En Route To My 79th Year

- by Keith Gilbert

Congrats...We've reached 25,  
300 reads from our biblio-hive.  
A few - raves and awe,  
And a few more with flaw,  
But all keep us young and alive!

I'm lucky to have a twin sister, Kathe. We shared 2nd grade class. I loved math, and set to learn my tables a cappella...  $5 \times 5 = 25$ ,  $5 \times 6 = 30$ . I think I sang these day and night! When teacher would ask Kathe a math question, she'd say, "Ask Keith, he knows all the answers!" Well, that's the last grade we shared. Kathe became an accomplished artist... I pursued math and physics. We often chortle about those times. But to this day she can't add two numbers, and I can only draw conclusions!

My dear Mother was 100% Irish; she eagerly embraced "Happy Hour" and Tough Love. My mid-afternoon visits often elicited this..." Let's have a drink!" "But Mom", says I, "'Tis only 3pm." "Nonsense," she snorted, "it's 5pm in New York. Open some vino!"

And when I'd get into Doo-Doo, Mom would deliver brutal one-liners, eg,

- " If your friends jumped off a cliff, would you follow ?"
- " If you had just one ounce of common sense..."
- " I brought you into this world, ...and I can take you out !"

My Dad taught me golf at 10 years, but wouldn't let me play until learning all rules and civilities. I grew to love golf. Playing for Highland High School [HHS], we won State championship three years [1954 -56].

**My Fav Golf Story:** On the eve of my HHS final championship round we bought a few six-packs (fake ID's) and slunk after dark into a golf course sand trap. There we did what all testosteroneed teenagers would do: ribald stories, cigars, brews, and girls. After several hours, sated, and having yet four unopened beers, I buried this quartet of cans in the sand trap. "We'll exhume them tomorrow night to celebrate our [assumed] victory!" The next day I hit my ball into that same trap and, trying to blast out, exploded two cans of beer! This cost me two strokes plus the ire of our golf coach... but we still won the state title. I went on to play for UNM, but nothing matched this beer blast!

**How I Redoubled My Pursuit of Physics:** In the summer of '58 (me a rising junior at UNM), I was asked by a mortician friend to help him for two months while his partner convalesced. Tom assured he would OJT (on the job train) me, making my early contribution a "dead cinch."

I certainly learned a lot about morbidity, to wit:

- The eerie nights in the mortuary amidst a cordon of corpses
- The invasive violence of embalming, including the trocar, a spear for flinging a fusillade of formaldehyde into the body cavity.
- Post-autopsy bodies arriving with brains, heart, liver, etc. in separate bags.
- Lifting cadavers from an ambulance gurney to ours. Frequently the body would sag in the middle; the corpse would emit a long, mournful groan!

This experience "shouted" funeral directing was a "dead end"; I redoubled my quest of math and physics!

**My Main Calling:** I had a great 26 year stint in the Air Force. Most of my career was research and development... specifically, high energy lasers (HEL's). Two of my projects - the Airborne Laser Lab and the Airborne Laser - entailed demonstrating the efficacy of HEL's versus attacking Airborne Systems. I whistled both going to and coming from work! And 19 of my 26 years were at Kirtland AFB, NM!

**My Favorite Poet: Emily Dickinson** Many of her pieces are short 'n sweet, to wit:

My candle burns at both ends,  
It burns both day and night  
But OH, my friends and OH, my foes  
It gives such lovely light!

**Yes, I've Been Scammed:**

- Hired a charwoman... good references
- Monique cleaned superbly for 3 years. Our friendship included exchanging gifts each Christmas.
- Late evening Monique arrived unexpectedly. Distraught, she sobbed her Las Lunas home would be foreclosed unless she delivered \$3,000 by noon next.
- I discovered my act of charity was applied not to repossession but relocation... I never saw Monique again!

**A Quartet of Luminaries I Met**

1) In 1958 I caddied for Joe Louis... He was playing in a charity event at the UNM golf course. Known as the "Brown Bomber," Joe's pugilistic career included 68 Wins (54 KO's). He retired in 1951 after a mauling defeat at the hands of Rocky Marciano. As we walked the course, this

humble giant discussed family and hallowed career. Joe was radiant about his two epic encounters with the German boxer Max Schmeling!

Joe Louis' fight game was far better than his golf game! He is considered by many the greatest heavyweight!!

Sadly, Joe's retired life spiraled into a dark vortex of drugs and alcohol. Stints included a greeter at a Las Vegas casino. Joe Louis died penniless in 1981. And ironically, Max Schmeling was a pallbearer!!

2) In 1971 I played tournament contract bridge against Omar Sharif... then a top 25 bridge player, an "Oscarian" actor, and "hands down" the handsomest man in the world!

Omar sacheted to our table looking like "Laurence of Arabia"; he was in consort with ~20 female "Kibitzers" (observers who watch but do not get actively involved). And obviously this score of ladies focused "bedroom eyes" on Omar the Adonis!

I remember Omar pummeled me soundly, but was pristinely polite, and quick to give me kudos for my play of the cards!

This luminary legend quit playing competitive bridge in 2006 to escape being "a slave to his true passion." He died 2015 in Cairo, Egypt.

3) In 1992 I spectated the NCAA Men's Golf Finals at UNM Championship course. I followed a threesome including Tiger Woods (Stanford) and Phil Michelson (Arizona State). On the 2nd hole I met Earl Woods, Tiger's Dad. For the next 16 holes we "walked 'n talked," he about Tiger and me ~ New Mexico.

Earl, a retired army officer, gave Tiger golf clubs at 3 years, then devoted his entire life to making him the best!

At age 9 Tiger bought into this; he humbly told his Dad he would be the world's best! I don't recall how Tiger and Phil scored that day... However, Arizona State won the national title. Earl and I departed with a hearty handshake.

Tiger's golf career is monumental... 79 PGA victories, including 14 Majors... surpassed only by Jack Nicklaus.

Earl taught me the infinite devotion a father can have for his son... and perhaps, luckily, Earl passed before Tiger's life was "debauched" by his "testicular two-step"...

4) In 1965 as an Air Force captain I was selected to enroll in a graduate physics program at the U. of California. Luckily I was posted at "Teller Tech," a school of ~ 40 students located at the Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL). Edward Teller taught several classes in addition to being a mentor to most students. Our faculty included top notch scientists from LLNL. Indeed Teller Tech was utopia for graduate students!

**Two Jocular Anecdotes:**

(a) When Dr. Teller lectured, his secretary would interrupt for but a single caller (No, not Mizi, his wife, but Nobel Laureate Hans Bethe!) And during these rare events we students "chilled" while Edward discussed pithy physics with Hans!

(b) I and several students published a technical paper with Dr. Teller in 1967. The authors were listed as E. Teller, et. al.!

Edward Teller was a stellar scientist and teacher... I believe his luminous litany of accomplishments deserved a Nobel Prize. Sadly, his moniker - "Father of the H-Bomb" and the vitriolics with the Manhattan Project leader, Robert Oppenheimer, quashed the encomium he richly deserved...

Finally, I remember Edward Teller's lectures as mostly a history of "Teller Physics"... His personal interactions with Bethe, Heisenberg, Von Neumann, Feynman, Oppenheimer, Bohr... What delicious didactics!!

Edward Teller passed 2003, in Stanford, CA.

**Trekking in Nepal ... Singularly intriguing, to wit:**

1) Landed in Kathmandu... monkeys cavorting free range... these untouchable primates reside in the Holy Monkey Temple!

2) 80 Km jaunt on only paved road in Nepal via brightly festooned bus to Pokhara (trailhead). Breakdown at 50 Km... Pushed vehicle ~ 3 Km. Repaired using duct tape and wire!

3) Three weeks trekking... all trails up, down, and tortuous. Everything moves thereon... Hikers, bikes, beasts, and merchants. Med clinics 20-30 Km apart. Recent government trail side toilets installed... Doctors tasked with counting how many "Eshew the loo!"

4) No police in hamlets... Rather, heavily-armed soldiers patrol. No crime worries... villagers friendly... "Namaste" assured safe passage!

5) Kathmandu Egress - All herded onto tarmac... Luggage stacked nearby and armed soldiers surrounding us! Each ID's their baggage, and immediately boards 747 (process for ~ 200 passengers: about 1.5 hours). About a dozen suitcases unclaimed... adios, luggage!

**A fav short story: Menage a Mort**

"Careful, Sweetie, It's loaded," said Jim as he disrobed.

Lover Lola sat seductively in a diaphanous teddy. "This for your wife?"

"Nope, I'm hiring a hit man."

"How 'bout me?"

"That's laughable, Lola. Who'd be lame enough to hire a femme assassin?"

Lola beckoned Jim bedward while fondling the trigger...

"Your wife."



**Three fav hobbies:** Solar Technology, Poetry, and Probability

I've added PV (electric) and solar thermal to my homes. My primary home is "off grid," i.e., I charge a battery bank by day and then draw from it at night. Two summers ago during the World Series our neighborhood power "crashed." I didn't know of this calamity until neighbors began arriving outside my front window. Of course I let them in, charging only a glass of vino!

I also own 3 electric vehicles (EV's) - an e-bike, a scooter, and an e-car. And best of all I charge each with my solar PV's!

Whenever ol' sol is around,  
My electric and hot water abound.  
So, my plea to each friend,  
Make green living an end,  
And start planting sustainable ground!

I love probability! Like all branches of math, this discipline combines logic and critical thinking. But uniquely, probability (for many) is steeped in counterintuitive (CI) notions.

We all have intuition; when presented with a new challenge or situation, this experiential tool yields a quick "guess", i.e., "gut feeling."

Many are uncomfortable with risk and uncertainty. Thus, when one intuits and finds he errs, brain boggle can result!

**My fav example of CI:**

1) A family of 4 moves into your "hood"; a "gossip" says they have 2 children, at least one of which is a girl. What are the chances the other kid is a girl? A little reflection concludes the chance both are girls is 1/3.

2) A second neighbor confirms this new family has 2 children, but adds the older is a girl. Again... chances both girls?

Most intuit these as identical problems, but not so! In fact, by imposing a timeline on the siblings, the chance of a younger female is 1/2!

Post Script:

Sometimes when I have the time,  
I set to craft a pithy rhyme!  
For years we've shared our books and wine,  
Also great food, with desserts divine,  
A new chapter now, set to drum 'n fife,  
We'll share memories, linchpins of life,

And so, for each club biblio,  
All of us will better know!

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# Micro Biography

*by Robert Woods*

I had an odd professional career. I was born at the exact nadir of the "Great Depression". My mother died when I was fifteen and left my father with me, two younger siblings, and no steady job. He was in the constructing business and there was little building going on. I spent all of my early years flitting around the Eastern seaboard while he looked for work. I spent my youth building model airplanes and reading science fiction. Both of these activities shaped my future life. Watching model structures grow from two dimensional plans to tangible three-dimensional structures gave me an almost uncanny ability to visualize things in 3D. Much later, wanting to build radio-controlled models before it became a popular indoor pastime, I got an Advanced Class Radio Amateur's license. Decades after this my knowledge of electronics was valuable when I got into real satellite work. I got my first real job as a draftsman at sixteen and by eighteen I can honestly say I was as good as the best draftsmen. During this period, I read the *Odyssey* and developed a lifelong interest in ancient History and classical literature. I can show that I recognized, long before it became a reality, that space travel as inevitable. I joined the British Interplanetary Society in 1951. That society is still in existence and active. I also joined The American Rocket Society in the same year. ARS later joined with the Institute of the Aeronautical Sciences, went uptown, and formed the Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. They then informed me that us guys without diplomas were no longer welcome.

I spent ten years in a small engineering company in the presence of licensed engineers who were willing to direct me as to what to study, later recommend that I take the Engineer- in-Training examination. I would like to believe that this put the examiners in a bind since nobody without a degree had ever had the chutzpah to take the EIT exam without having at least a B.S. and there was no mechanism to filter me out. I ultimately got the P.E. and a few years later my family situation, which ad anchored me, changed enough for me to live ny own life and change directions. My sister, Mary, married (not particularly successfully), and my brother Michael entered the University of Pennsylvania with a trifle of financial help from me.

Armed with my P.E. and high scores on the Graduate Record Exams, when nobody had thought to install a filter for wise guys like myself, I was finally able to actually enter a university. I was convinced that four full years of undergraduate school would be a waste of time and therefore asked for advanced placement at several Engineering schools. Most of the Deans had enough mental flexibility to allow me to enter but all felt that God intended that anybody entering their school starred at the bottom with the freshmen and spent four years listening to subjects that I knew very well. I was generally received well enough, with one exception, to encourage me to apply to the university I had dreamed of but never thought I could really enter: Princeton. Here again Fate seemed to be programmed in my favor. At the

time of my application, there was a new Dean of Mechanical Engineering who was a wild man who enjoyed rocking the boat. He pointed out to the Admissions Office that the Holy Book of Admissions had a clause to the effect that anybody with unusual credentials would be treated on his own merit, but it hadn't happened since the University was founded in 1746. On this basis I was admitted as a Junior and went through the Bachelor's program in two years.

Shortly before graduating, the Dean intimated to me that there was a Fellowship available if I wanted it. I went to graduate school and received my Doctorate in 1967. During this period, I met and courted my wife Judy who was an elementary school teacher in Princeton. She has since gone on to receive an advanced degree from UNM.

Since I received my Doctorate a couple of years too late for me to be a space pioneer as I had hoped, I elected for a career in upper air research. Sandia National Labs in Albuquerque was perfect and had the advantage of being in a city with a very active, if small, soaring club. I had always wanted to be a glider pilot so the decision to move here was dictated. I have been active as a soaring pilot until a few years ago when my vision went bad. In the years that I flew, and later, the Albuquerque Soaring Club has become world renowned. The climate in New Mexico for soaring is arguably the best in the world.

Upon arriving at Sandia National Labs I found myself faced with another decision. Many of my colleagues elected to take jobs in Management. I preferred to do hands-on Engineering and real atmospheric research. Since joining the Labs have been involved in upper air research with stratospheric balloons and sounding rockets. Later, after peace had broken out, with Space Shuttle payloads and Robotics.

At the very end of the "Cold War" it was thought that the US was obliged to maintain a posture of readiness to test nuclear devices in the atmosphere. There was a nuclear test ban treaty in effect, but the Soviets were well known to have a casual attitude towards treaties. For that reason, Sandia and particularly the department in which I worked, were charged with maintaining a capability to field instruments to diagnose the effects of atmospheric nuclear bursts. My department exercised this capability by developing and flying diagnostic instrumentation. This gave me a charter to participate in a number of interesting experiments.

During my first years in the department I designed, had fabricated (and in one case patented) novel vacuum gauges for use in the demanding environment of a small sounding rocket. These led to creation of a mass spectrometer to measure atmospheric composition above one hundred kilometers.

The existence of my flight mass spectrometer was instrumental in getting me involved in an exotic program; specifically, flying a sounding rocket through an auroral display and bringing back a piece of it. This was done by using my spectrometer as a diagnostic while another experimenter's payload deployed a mylar sail and then reeled it in along with the auroral particles deposited on it. The experiment depended upon retrieving the sounding rocket which

had impacted some distance above the Arctic circle in Akaka this retrieval happened to be the most interesting part of the experiment for me.

The downed sounding rocket, which had parachuted into a forest, was to be recovered by brining in a ground team by helicopter. I maneuvered to join the team and was surprised to see how readily agreeable everyone was to accommodate me. I later learned that they were all frightened. I found that there was some justification for this. The track of the recovery helicopter was through, not over, a high mountain range.

After peace broke out, Sandia upper management concluded that there was no more need for a small rocket specialist. My experience in instrument development brought me to the attention of the Manager of a department which was cooperating with a Columbia University professor who was an authority in X-ray astronomy. It was hoped that we could improve the technology of X-ray telescopes. The Columbia University group also collaborated with a Russian group doing the same work. This led to my making three trips to Moscow to consult. The Russians also arranged trips to the radio astronomy installation in the Crimea and another trip to Samarkand. This all happened at the same time as "the coup." I gave a group of visiting atmospheric scientists a tour of the American Southwest. By coincidence, this occurred at the time that my wife and I were living in Washington, I as a congressional Science Fellow and my wife, Judy, as a volunteer tour guide in the Capitol.

When I returned from my year on Capitol Hill, I was depressed to learn that Sandia Management had made no provision to capitalize on my experience with John Glenn's committee. Looking where to fit in, I took a position in the department which was involved in an abortive attempt to enter Robotics. When it became clear to me that the effort was totally unmanaged and doomed to fail, I retired from Sandia.

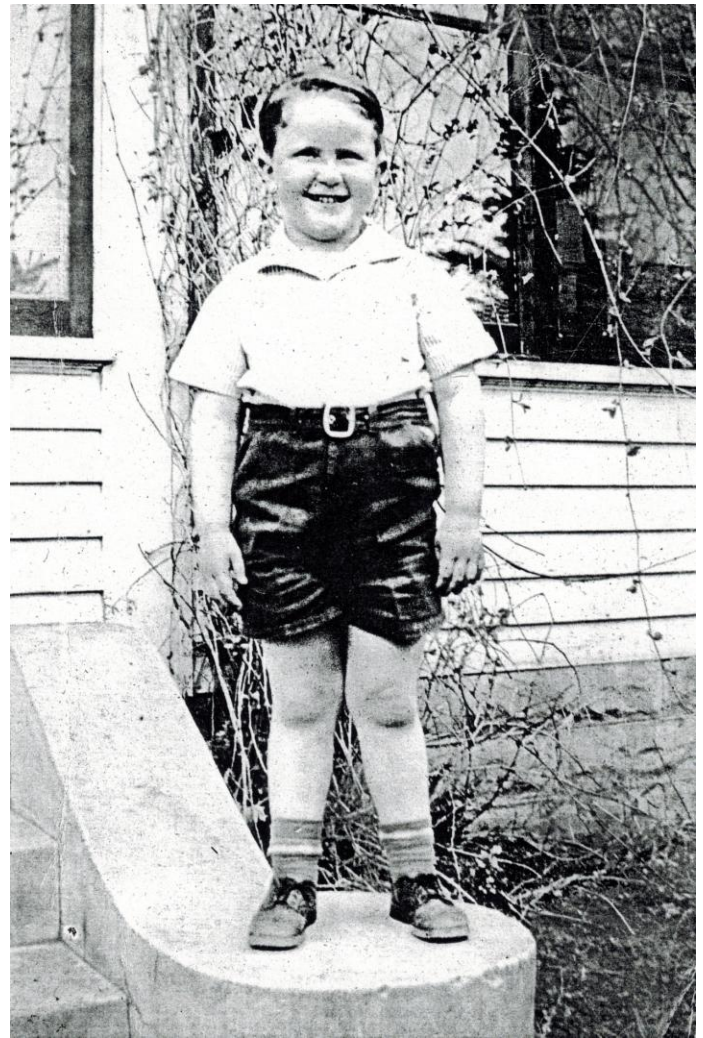
My first major activity since retiring was to build a kit plane; a 52HP RANS 'Coyote.' This plane resembles a shrunken version of the Piper J3. After logging a hundred hours on it I sold it to a gentleman who promptly wrecked it. During the decade before and after retiring I published something over a dozen brief articles in *Mechanical Engineering* magazine. My articles dealt with various landmark accomplishments in engineering through the centuries. The earliest in calendar years detailed the making of Egyptian chariot wheels and progressed through the gigantic water pumps for Versailles' fountains. I also touched on such things as the Cotton Gin. Until I recently retired from Committee work I was active in the ASME History and Heritage Committee. I was named as a Fellow of ASME.

Judy, my wife of fifty-two years, has been busy with numerous volunteer activities, in addition to publishing several novels and getting a Master's degree. We have grown children. Our daughter, Lisa, manages some computer affairs for the State of Wisconsin and has embarked on a Master's degree in Graduate Counseling. Son Rob recently retired after a colorful Navy career that involved ejecting successfully from a damaged F14 Tomcat and going on to become the Naval Attaché in Zagreb. He is currently involved in missile defense.



We have a twenty-five-year-old grandson, Jernej, who is a fraud investigator for Apple. He has a Yugoslavian name given him by his other grandparents. Rob's two sons, Reed, 13, and Curt, 11, attend school in Norfolk. Reed is currently addicted to flying radio-controlled drones.

Every day, I give thanks to the Lord for being in New Mexico. I have seen the East Coast and found it wanting.



Robert Woods c. 1937 (left) and c. 1938 (right)

# On Building Harpsichords

*by Charlie Palmer*

For more than 300 years, the harpsichord was the dominant keyboard instrument in Europe. Its demise coincided with the end of the Baroque era in music, in about 1750, and the beginning of the Classical period. In just a few years, the music of JS Bach was replaced with that of Haydn and Mozart. The piano was invented in about 1700. By 1760 it had largely supplanted the harpsichord, which had all but disappeared by the time of the French Revolution. Beginning in the mid-20th century there was a revival of interest in the historical harpsichord, with efforts to re-establish the performance and building traditions of the Baroque period.

Over the past forty years, I've built four harpsichords. How did I become interested in this work, and how did I accomplish it?

My interest in making harpsichords grew out of several factors. As a child, I had piano lessons for seven years. I don't have the genes to be an good performer; however, the musical training gave me an excellent foundation for the appreciation of music. My introduction to Baroque music came at age 12, when I learned one of the Bach Two-Part Inventions. I was immediately taken with the Baroque in general and with Bach in particular. At its best, Baroque music is characterized by a blending of control (the complex and almost mathematical structure in the music) and exuberance (its extraordinary emotional content). Thus it appeals to both the rational and artistic sensibilities – music to please both the scientist and the artist. To this day, I listen more to Baroque music than to any other form.

Second, I've had a long-term interest in woodworking. My dad was an amateur woodworker. When I was a child, he often needed an extra pair of hands when glueing up a piece of furniture or getting a large board through the table saw. While he never set out to teach me the craft, I learned the general principles and habits while assisting him. In my twenties, I set up a shop and began doing my own projects. I'm largely self-taught.

Finally, I've had a life-long interest in the visual arts, art history, and industrial design. Musical instruments represent a confluence of all these areas. In addition to their musical function, instruments are usually meant to be beautiful; their design reflects the visual arts of the period. And, they are an industrial product, manufactured (albeit in small numbers) and sold like furniture or appliances.

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What is involved in building a harpsichord? There are three phases of construction, each comprising about a third of the work.



The first job is to fabricate the harpsichord's case and stand. This is relatively straightforward cabinetry, and an experienced furniture maker can complete the job successfully. There are some complicating factors. As with any musical instrument, there are plenty of curves and odd angles. And, some of the pieces require special techniques, such as thinning a 3 by 6 foot soundboard to a thickness of 1/8" or less.

The second task is painting and decoration. These instruments were built during the Baroque era, and their decoration can be intricate and complex. For example, virtually all 18<sup>th</sup> century French harpsichords had a decorative soundboard painting done in egg tempera, with flowers, birds, insects, and ornamental borders. If you want to be historically accurate and you're copying an elaborate original, this phase of the build can be lengthy.

The final phase is construction and installation of the musical action. This is by far the most difficult task, and it bears little relation to conventional woodworking skills. The work is fussy, meticulous, and time-consuming. Many parts must be fabricated with great precision, built to tolerances that are usually associated with metal rather than wood. If this task isn't done properly, the harpsichord will be hard to play and may sound awful. Unfortunately, there isn't much written about this job, and if you don't have personal instruction from a master, you are likely to fail.

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When I was about 26, shortly after I moved to New Mexico, I decided to build a harpsichord. How do you learn the craft? For something as arcane and specialized as harpsichord construction, New Mexico is a pretty isolated place, with no nearby harpsichord builders to provide assistance and instruction. My first job was to read the relatively small body of literature on the subject.

After World War II, there was a resurgence of interest in Baroque performance practices and construction of Baroque instruments according to historical models. Frank Hubbard, a disgruntled graduate student in English at Harvard, left school in the late 1940's and devoted himself to the study of old harpsichords in Europe. He returned to the United States and became one of the first harpsichord builders to craft instruments that were closely modeled after 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century originals.

Hubbard wrote a book which remains one of the most important sources on the subject – *Three Centuries of Harpsichord Making*, published in 1965. I bought this book in 1973 and studied it carefully; to this day, it remains an important reference in my shop. At that time, there was little else of value to read. The Old Guys were tradesmen who didn't write about their methods, and in the days before the internet there was only minimal academic work that was easily accessible.

In the late 1960's, Hubbard also began marketing harpsichord kits. His kits were the first to provide all of the drawings, instructions, and materials to make historically accurate

instruments. To quote an early Hubbard brochure: "Let me say this about our kits: if the kit is carefully assembled, well voiced, and handsomely finished, the result equals the product of any professional maker and resembles its prototype very closely."

So, after reading everything I could find, the next step was to build a harpsichord kit. At the time I was a novice woodworker, and the Hubbard kits were intimidating. They are accurate copies of the originals, using 18<sup>th</sup> century joinery and construction techniques; Hubbard made few concessions to the 20<sup>th</sup> century woodworker. So, I decided to build a less complex kit from another manufacturer, an instrument with simplified materials and construction methods but with little fidelity to 18<sup>th</sup> century design.

It took me about three years to build this harpsichord, which I finished in 1977. It was structurally sound; however, it was a musical disaster. The bad result was due to a couple of factors. First, the instrument deviated from historical models. After 300 years of experience, the Old Guys had it right, and the 20<sup>th</sup> century has proved that deviation from their original designs yields an inferior musical result. Second, and more importantly – when I installed and adjusted the musical action, I just didn't know what I was doing, and there was no one in our community who could tell me how to do it.

Despite this failure, I still wanted to build a good instrument. The first step was to start with a good kit – I chose a Hubbard kit, based on one of the most important surviving 18<sup>th</sup> century French harpsichords. The cabinet-making task was formidable, but with several years more of woodworking experience I built a pretty good case and stand.

Decoration also went well. Painting and gilding the case were lengthy but straightforward tasks. I was able to obtain detailed color photographs of a well-preserved French soundboard painting from a European museum, and with the aid of these photos an artist friend did an excellent job on the soundboard. The final appearance of the instrument was good.

That left the musical action. For this, I got training! In 1983, the head of the Hubbard shop came to the University of New Mexico to give a week-long seminar on harpsichord musical action. Two years later, I travelled to Atlanta to get one-on-one instruction from a woman who had worked for several professional builders in the eastern U.S. After this training, I was able to complete an instrument which had a satisfying feel to the performer and sounded good to the listener. I was pleased with the result. I finished this harpsichord in 1986, after four years of work. A few years later I gave it to the Episcopal Cathedral in Albuquerque, where it continues to be used in concerts of Baroque music.

I built a third instrument from a kit in the late 1980's. Modeled after a 17<sup>th</sup> century Italian harpsichord of relatively simple design, it also turned out well.

After building these three instruments, I felt that I had mastered the craft as well as any amateur builder could hope to do.

My ultimate goal had always been to build a harpsichord from scratch, without a kit.

I did preliminary work on the project twenty years ago. One of the best surviving 18<sup>th</sup> century French harpsichords is in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, a magnificent instrument built by Parisian Henri Hemsch. There have been two restorations of this Hemsch, in 1968 and 1987. In 1988 I traveled to Boston, and the BMFA gave me access to all the documentation, photographs, and drawings from these restorations. Based on this information, I drew a plan for my version of this harpsichord.

I had planned to begin construction immediately after drawing the plan; but parenthood intervened and I was very busy at work. So, I didn't start the build until 2008, after my retirement. I finished my Hemsch in 2012, after four years of work. The friend who had painted my soundboard in 1983 decorated the sound-board on this one also.

I didn't keep a log, but I estimate that I spent at least 1,500 hours building this harpsichord. It was worth all the effort – I think it turned out very well. The Hemsch is now in my living room, where it has been used in several house concerts over the past six years.

Do I play it? The answer: not much. While I've gone through periods of well-intentioned practice, I just don't have the patience and skills to be a good musician. It's also a question of what sort of tedium you enjoy – thousands of hours of practice at the keyboard, or thousands of hours of fussy, meticulous construction? I'm better suited for the latter.



18<sup>th</sup> Century French Harpsichord by Charles Palmer: keyboard made of basswood, ebony, maple, pearwood, and bone. This is the fourth and this one is kept in Charlie's living room.

Reference: <http://www.finewoodworking.com/readerproject/2014/01/28/18th-century-french-harpsichord>

# Some Ancient History

by Ron Bousek

*Dark Town Strutters' Ball*, now there's a song you don't hear much anymore. I haven't heard it in years – maybe more.

*I'll be down to get you in a taxi, honey  
You better be ready about half past eight  
Now dearie, don't be late  
I want to be there when the band starts playing...*

When I was in about the seventh grade, I played that song in a very small combo of clarinet, accordion, and cornet (that's me). It had a catchy Dixieland beat that appealed to my emerging adolescent energies. We all went to St. Jude's Catholic grade school, and the clarinet player's dad was our leader. We practiced in his living room. This was a couple of years before rock and roll came on the scene and made a big splash.



Over the next couple of years, we picked up a drummer, guitarist, and tenor sax. We moved from the living room into my basement. The clarinetist switched to alto sax because that was way cooler and worked better with dance music and rock and roll. We called our combo the Counts and had that name painted on our music stands like all the big bands of the time. In high school we made spending money playing at school dances and for fraternal organizations like the Elks and the Odd Fellows. At some of those fraternal gigs our young eyes burned with cigarette smoke, and afterwards our clothes reeked and would take days to air out.

We played old standards like *Stella by Starlight*, *In the Mood*, and *I'm in the Mood for Love*. Elvis moved from a Country sound to more of a backbeat—*You ain't nothin' but a hound dog*. Bill Haley and the Comets did too, and before you knew it we had rock and roll—*Rock Around The Clock*. And we played some of that too.

For me as a grade-schooler, before rock and roll, it was Rhythm and Blues. You couldn't hear it on daytime radio, but you could if you stayed up until 11 pm and tuned into the Moondog Show on station WJW in Cleveland. The Drifters, the Five Keys, the Crows, the Midnighters, BB King were all there along with Chuck Berry and Fats Domino belting out the blues and what was sometimes called "race music." The tunes quickly migrated to pop radio, and Pat Boone was soon there in his white-buck shoes with covers of the songs to assure suburban parents that the music could be sanitized and wasn't all that bad—and could be a money-maker for white promoters too.

But my favorite music was jazz – big band jazz. Stan Kenton, Count Basie, Les Elgart, the Dorseys. Any band that had a screaming brass section that could send chills down your spine. This was the late 50's

and early 60's and some of the bands from the 40's were still touring, so you could see them in person and get an experience that not even the new recording technology, "high fidelity", could provide. We got our recorded music in the form of the new 45 rpm records, with the big hole in the middle, and the new stereo hi-fi LP's which played at 33 1/3 rpm. Now you could have 12 songs on one record instead of a bulky album containing six 2-song 78 rpms.

After Elyria District Catholic High School (class of '59), I went to Case Institute of Technology in Cleveland, Ohio, and my high school sweetheart, Grace, went to nearby St. John's College downtown. So, we could still date on weekends.

At this time most of the grand ballrooms in northern Ohio were still in operation, but just barely. In our college years, Grace and I liked to dance and were able to experience their graciousness and to see their inevitable decline. Their hay day had been in the late 30's and 40's. There were ballrooms at the amusement parks at Chrystal Beach, Cedar Point, and Chippewa Lake. The dance floors were large by today's standards, perhaps just a little smaller than a basketball court with an elevated bandstand at one end. The theme was universally art deco with pink, green and blue neon lighting. Tables where one could enjoy a cool drink between dances surrounded a huge shiny wooden floor.

Chrystal Beach Park is now Chrystal Shores Apartments. Chippewa Lake Park is now a deserted ghost town of amusement rides overgrown with vegetation, remains of lost generations past, whose ruins you can explore on *youtube*. Cedar Point is still going strong as a multi-roller coaster top-tier amusement park. (What happened to the ballroom, I don't know.)

Grace graduated with a BS in Nursing and I with a BS in Physics—the first in our families to attend college. I was in Air Force ROTC and was commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant upon graduation. We married right after graduation, loaded our '56 Pontiac trunk with wedding gifts, and motored out to Monterey, California where I attended the Naval Postgraduate School for two school years. I graduated with a MS in Physics with a nuclear engineering effects sub-specialty. (Thesis title: Hamiltonian Form of the Kemmer Equation for a Spinless Boson). Grace worked for a dermatologist in Monterey, some of whose patients were literary types, including Henry Miller. (This was Steinbeck country, after all.)

Son, Matthew, was born at Fort Ord Army hospital in May of 1964 at the exact time I was taking a final exam in quantum mechanics. One of Grace's memories of her stay at the hospital was the night-nurse telling ghost stories on the maternity ward. Rooms were not private, and the new moms checked out their babies on schedule like library books from the nursery. The Army has its schedules and procedures.

This was a time when the military was building up its forces in Viet Nam. Fort Ord was basic training for new recruits headed there. President Johnson was just beginning a disastrous "March of Folly" later described by author Barbara Tuchman. Among the last sights of America many of these young trainees would ever see would be the sand dunes on the beach of that base.

I was a brand-new Air Force Second Lieutenant at my first duty station, and it was Navy. Officer students were from all the military services. The vast majority had already served one or more tours before being selected for the NPGS, many of them returning from a tour in Nam. When I reported for duty to the Navy Commander's office, I gave him my best salute, but he informed me that in the Navy

you don't salute without cover (hat). So, I had already learned something, and it was only my first day in the Navy. I learned a lot more about the Navy after that.

After the Navy school, we moved to Sacramento, California and McClellan AFB. In addition to Viet Nam, this was also during the height of the "cold war" with adversaries Communist China and the USSR engaged in tests of nuclear weapons. I was assigned to a radiochemistry lab which analyzed samples of airborne nuclear debris collected from atomic tests. Data was analyzed with the help of IBM 1401 and 1620 business mainframes. This was a big improvement over crunching numbers on mechanical Marchant desk calculators which were still widely in use by individuals. They made a distinctive grinding sound when you entered your number by pulling the crank on the side. Data was entered into the IBM's by means of punched paper tape or punched cards. The officer in charge was a whiz and programmed the IBM's scientific calculations mostly in machine language. FORTRAN software was available but took up too much memory in a machine whose capacity was measured in tens of kilobytes.

My physics degree spared me from a tour in Viet Nam. If I'd had a degree in chemistry, I would most likely been assigned there as a munitions officer. Grace gave birth to our second child, Mark, in September 1965. We now had two boys 16 months difference in age.

After three years at McClellan Central Laboratory, I was drafted to move up to HQ-level, and we moved to Woodbridge, Virginia. AFTAC was located in suburban Alexandria. Data from the world-wide nuclear test monitoring system was analyzed there, and I was one of the analysts. One of my perks was to sit in on the occasional Bethe Panel deliberations. The panel was chaired by Nobel laureate Hans Bethe, a nuclear physicist who had been chair of the Theoretical Division at Los Alamos during the development of the atomic bomb. The panel consisted of top scientists from Los Alamos and Livermore laboratories. Their job was to look over all the data and determine the nature of the nuclear device which released the debris. The important parameters were the type of nuclear fuel, weight and yield.

At our local Catholic church, Grace taught children's' religious ed and I got involved with church music and bible study. Folk music was making its way into the Mass, and I was involved as a guitarist and song leader. Grace returned to nursing and worked in a doctor's office on Saturdays. We adopted daughter Suzanne when she was two months old, and now there were five in the family.

The tour at AFTAC lasted four years. After a lot of paper work, I was finally selected for a doctoral program in optical physics at the University of Arizona, where I studied under Professor Marlan Scully. We moved there in the summer of 1972. Daughter Joanne was born at the hospital at Davis-Monthan AFB that same year. Grace and I were pretty heavily involved in parish activities at the new and dynamic St. Pius X Catholic church on the far east side (at that time) of Tucson. Three years later, I had completed all my course work and most of my dissertation.

Our family moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1975. My PhD was awarded in January 1976. My final two duty assignments were at Kirtland AFB with the AF Weapons Lab and then with Field Command Defense Nuclear Agency. At AFWL I worked on high energy laser development. At FCDNA I worked on high explosive tests at White Sands Missile Range, and I have to say I had a blast.

The story continues, but here my memoir must end due to editorial word limit. Part 2 covering the next 40 years may appear elsewhere in whole or serial form.

\_\_\_\_\_ *To be continued, possibly* \_\_\_\_\_





Grace and Ron Bousek join Eleanor and Franklin at FDR Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, NY.



Susan and Gary Ganong join Eleanor and Franklin at FDR Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, NY. See how we did that? LTBC rules!



# Doo-Wop, Baseball and the LTBC

by Tom Genoni

It was the spring of 1953, when I was 9 years old, that I fell in love for the first time — with doo-wop music. It was the era of Perry Como, Patti Page and *Your Hit Parade*. Rock ‘n’ roll was on its way (though not yet here to stay)<sup>1</sup>. I had recently discovered KWBR, broadcasting from nearby Oakland, CA. KWBR had begun broadcasting in 1947 to serve the African-American communities that relocated from the South to Oakland (and other West Coast cities) as part of the second phase of the Great Migration. But the music also swept me up, and (judging by the makeup of the audiences in televised doo-wop specials) lots of other white kids too. It was impossible not to be drawn in to doo-wop’s impossibly catchy melodies<sup>2</sup>, amusingly nonsensical lyrics<sup>3</sup>, and beautiful harmonies<sup>4</sup>. It’s still my favorite music, and I have amassed a collection comprising upwards of 750(!) 45s. I’ll get them out and play them on my Harman Kardon stereo, purchased by my dad in 1959, if I’ve had a couple of drinks or am feeling especially sentimental and nostalgic (often the same thing). I spent many hours sitting at the kitchen table of our split-level house in Richmond, CA, doing homework and listening to music, often with my hand behind the radio serving as a human antenna in order to pick up the relatively weak KWBR signal. KWBR played black artists exclusively, but ironically I found out later that the founder, general manager and main DJ, Bouncin’ Bill Doubleday, was white — a sign of the times, I guess. As “white” stations began playing “black” music over the next decade, it was interesting to watch the rigid boundary between black and white in popular music soften, probably faster than it did in most other areas of society.

Another perhaps unexpected leader in desegregation was Major League Baseball, and the Brooklyn Dodgers led the way by signing Jackie Robinson in 1947 (possibly the last good thing the Dodgers ever did). By the time I started following baseball closely in 1953, a number of outstanding black players were in the major leagues. Unaware of the Negro leagues and the history of segregation in baseball, I assumed they had always been there — perhaps also a sign of the times. Over the next two or three decades, great black players were to become a truly dominant force in baseball. In 1953 the Braves moved from Boston to Milwaukee and, since there was no major league team west of St. Louis at the time, I adopted them as my team. The following year they brought up a rookie named Henry Aaron, who quickly became my favorite player — so I take *some* credit for the legendary, Hall of Fame career that followed. In 1958 there was a second “great migration” to the West Coast, when the hated Dodgers moved from Brooklyn to Los Angeles and the Giants moved from New York to San Francisco. I finally had a hometown team! I fell in love for the second time, becoming a Giants fan for life. Too young to drive (and with no car anyway), and with a TV universe that was at best meager and at worst insipid (*My Little Margie*, anyone?), I turned to baseball and music for sustenance during my junior high

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<sup>1</sup> *Rock and Roll Is Here To Stay*, Danny & the Juniors, ABC Records, 1958.

<sup>2</sup> *Gee*, the Crows, Rama Records, 1953.

<sup>3</sup> *Sh-Boom*, the Chords, Cat Records, 1954; *Rama Lama Ding Dong*, the Edsels, Dub Records, 1958.

<sup>4</sup> *In the Still of the Nite*, The Five Satins, Standord Records, 1956.

and high school years. I did make sure to catch *American Bandstand* every afternoon and, besides the music — every song, according to the teen dancers, had a “good beat” that you could “dance to” — I enjoyed watching the shifting romances (“Ooh, Justine’s dancing with Bob now?”). My occasional clumsy foray into the dating world<sup>5</sup> told me that I wasn’t ready to fall in love for real — yet.

It was the spring of 1961, and I enrolled in the School of Engineering at UC Berkeley, poised to join the likes of Jack Weinberg and Mario Savio as a radical leftist of the Free Speech Movement. Had I indeed gone to Cal, I might, instead of working on this memoir, be composing a blog about Trump’s “dangerous” tax cuts while strolling along Nancy Pelosi Drive — situated oh-so-appropriately between Jack Kennedy Drive and Martin Luther King Drive — in Golden Gate Park. However, an 11<sup>th</sup>-hour appointment to The Military Academy at West Point came through, my life took a right turn, and the Army (and Air Force) took charge of my activities for the next 25 years. I recall being less than excited (an understatement) about the approaching holidays in that first year at West Point. As plebes, we would have to stay on post over the Christmas break, unlike our counterparts at Navy and Air Force who were allowed to go home and see their mommies<sup>6</sup>. We grunts were much tougher than those sissies, of course — we just cried on the phone with our families. At least, that’s what I did. But it turned out to be a stroke of good fortune for me (an even bigger understatement) as during the second week of the break I met my wife-to-be Sheila<sup>7</sup>. Hard to believe, but she was only 16 at the time — while I, on the other hand, was a mature and worldly 17<sup>8</sup>. That was the beginning of a wonderful relationship that has lasted 57 years thus far. Sheila is still my sweetheart<sup>9</sup>, and of course, my far better half.

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It was the spring of 1962 (this opening will elicit groans from the LTBC members who have heard the story more than once, which is almost all of them; though I reserve the right to tell it each time we welcome a new member!) when William Faulkner paid a visit to West Point. My English instructor, Major Joe Fant, was a West Point classmate of Paul Summers, Faulkner’s son-in-law, and through this connection he helped arrange the two-day visit on April 19-20. Faulkner toured the Academy buildings and grounds, visited two English classes, and gave a reading from a working draft of his upcoming novel *The Reivers*, which was later honored, first with the Pulitzer Prize and second, by becoming an LTBC selection. Mine was one of his two classroom visits, and as I was — atypically — late that day, the only seat left was right up front next to the author. I remember nothing of the substance of the question and answer session, but something Faulkner said must have amused me because, in a widely circulated photograph of Faulkner that includes me and a couple of my classmates, I have a broad smile on my face. The photo appeared in the *New York Times*, *Time* magazine, and on the cover of the book *Faulkner at West Point*, edited by Major Fant and published in 1964. The book has been reprinted a couple of times, and if you just *have* to have one, I strongly suggest you get the first edition with my face gracing

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<sup>5</sup> *Gee, But I’m Lonesome*, Lee Andrews and the Dreamlovers, Parkway Records, 1963; *Tears on My Pillow*, Little Anthony and the Imperials, End Records, 1958.

<sup>6</sup> *Dear Mother*, the Hurricanes, King Records, 1956.

<sup>7</sup> *Sheila*, Tommy Roe, ABC Records, 1962 (*not really doo-wop, but I couldn’t leave it out*); *Pretty, Pretty Girl*, the Timetones, ATCO Records, 1961.

<sup>8</sup> *I’m So Young*, the Students, Note Records, 1958.

<sup>9</sup> *I’ll Be Forever Loving You*, the El Dorados, Vee-Jay Records, 1955.

the cover. It would make a great story if I could report that this brief brush with literary nobility instilled in me a love of literature and turned me into a devoted, lifelong reader, but that wasn't the case. In fact, it wasn't until I joined the LBTC that I began to read consistently, and I credit my book club membership with helping me to finally appreciate classic literature. It's never too late.

In the fall of that same year, the Giants reached the World Series in only their fifth season in San Francisco. But it was not to be: After tying the series 3-3, they ended up losing to the Yankees 1-0 in a nail-biter of a seventh game at Candlestick Park. Bobby Richardson snared Willie McCovey's potentially game-tying line drive, ending the game and stranding Matty Alou on third base. Through my heartbreak, I remember thinking naively that it would only be a couple of years before the Giants would return, this time to win it. But the baseball gods have minds of their own, and it turned out to be almost half a century before the Giants would win the Fall Classic, finally rewarding their loyal and long-suffering fans in 2010. Playing now with house money, San Francisco went on to win it again in 2012 and 2014. If I've done the math right, I shouldn't complain about losing for another 30 or 40 years (but of course I'm complaining already).

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It was the spring of 1993, and Sheila and I were out to dinner when we ran across a friend of Sheila's from her book club and her husband John Beresky. During the course of a brief conversation, John floated the suggestion that we form a men's book club. I said sure, thinking that probably nothing would come of it. But John took the initiative, and within a couple of weeks he had organized and hosted the first meeting of what was to become the Last Thursday Book Club. Our first selection was Norman MacLean's beautiful and heartbreaking *A River Runs Through It*, a book which in my opinion warrants more than one reading; and in fact we did reread it several years later. (For the record: The rumor that we all forgot that we had read it already is not true. Given the average age of our members, however, you can be forgiven for believing it!)

There were four attendees at that inaugural meeting — John; Gary Ganong; Dan Herrick, a colleague of Gary's at the Air Force Weapons Laboratory; and me. Dan was primarily interested in non-fiction and so decided not to return. John left the club after a minor dust-up a few years later, and Gary subsequently moved to California. Let's see...I believe that makes me the lone remaining original club member. (Mike, you may be the MVP of the book club, but I still have seniority.)

At the second LTBC meeting, Gary (who went on to become our most prolific recruiter) brought along — you guessed it — Mike Blackledge, a friend of both Gary's and mine from our days together teaching at the Air Force Academy in the early 70s. Despite the cloud of not being a charter member, Mike quickly became — and remains today — the chief organizer, cheerleader and secretary of the club. (Thank you, Mike!)

I am also eternally grateful to ex-club member John Taylor for introducing us to the incomparable Vladimir Nabokov with his selection of *Glory*, an English translation of one of the nine novels Nabokov wrote in Russian before he and his family fled Europe for America in 1940. I soon began collecting and reading all of his other Russian works, as well as the eight novels he wrote in English during his years in the U.S. Besides *Glory*, the club has read *Invitation To a Beheading*, *Bend Sinister* and Nabokov's

masterpiece *Lolita*, the selection for our memorable road trip to the enchanting La Posada hotel in Winslow, AZ. No other author I have read can match Nabokov's extraordinary prose — smart, at times funny, at times moving, always beautiful. If I put together a ranking of all the books the club has read, *Lolita* would be at the very top.

The LTBC, a group of self-described “mildly mature males,” has been going strong now for 25 years. We are a men's book club — during a discussion of Lance Armstrong's memoir *It's Not About the Bike* in which we were marveling at his fight against both testicular and brain cancer, Mike mused, “Testicles and brains...without those we'd be just another women's book club!” But we do bring a broad range of life experiences to our discussions, with a membership that has included doctors, lawyers, academics, professional military, scientists, engineers and even a statistician. Although we have all entered that stage of life commonly referred to as “elderly,” we will forge bravely ahead — until perhaps that Thursday evening when a majority of our members gets lost on the way to our meeting.

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*Postscript:* A final anecdote involving doo-wop, our illustrious club secretary and his lovely and charming wife, Bonnie:

Doo-wop died out near the end of the 50s, then experienced a brief revival in the early 60s, during which the terms “doo-wop” and “oldies” were first introduced<sup>10</sup>. Since then, the genre has been kept alive by occasional plays on “oldies” radio and by a small community of diehard fans and record collectors, of which I am one. I had never been a collector, but about 20 years ago I began with the intention of acquiring a few of my favorite old records. With the help of eBay — and a somewhat compulsive nature — “a few old records” has grown into the sizeable collection I have today. Mike and Bonnie were aware of this, and when they heard what they thought was an obscure doo-wop song on the radio, they decided to play a trick on yours truly. They concocted a little one-act skit in which Mike was to describe the song they heard and stump me as to the title and artist. Then Bonnie was supposed to jump in with the answer, surprising and impressing me with this bit of knowledge. When the time came for their little performance, Mike gave Bonnie the high sign and launched into a somewhat confused description of the song. I knew right away that it was *Daddy's Home*<sup>11</sup>, answer song to *A Thousand Miles Away*<sup>12</sup> (who wouldn't know that?) but decided to feign ignorance and play along. It was now Bonnie's turn to chime in — but unfortunately, she completely forgot what she was supposed to say and instead dissolved into laughter, as did Mike and I. The whole episode was hilarious, one of many memorably funny moments we have been fortunate enough to spend with our dear friends the Blackledges.

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<sup>10</sup> *Play Those Oldies, Mr. DeeJay*, Anthony and the Sophomores, Mercury Records, 1963; *Those Oldies But Goodies*, Caesar and the Romans, Del-Fi Records, 1961; *Memories of Those Oldies But Goodies*, Little Caesar and the Romans, Del-Fi Records, 1961.

<sup>11</sup> *Shep and the Limelites*, Hull Records, 1958.

<sup>12</sup> *The Heartbeats*, Hull records, 1956.

# The Real Katrina Hurricane

*by Don Tubesing*

New Orleans, April 2006 – a dynamic and disparate community of resiliently-loving and ever-hopeful people hampered for the moment by crushing loss, overwhelming unknowns, and a decade of rebuilding ahead.

*I wrote this narrative poem two weeks after my trip to New Orleans to help repair a church community center. A situation that is overwhelming and remains troublesome.*

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At a corner bar in the French Quarter I saw a special drink advertised.  
They called it, "The Katrina Hurricane."  
It was very expensive.  
I began to wonder, "What's in it?"  
    But I didn't need to ask.  
I knew in my heart it must be a potent "morning after" drink.  
    ....And here's how it's made.

First, you create a large handcrafted cup out of the soggy first page of your last year's tax return and the ink-smeared back half of the first letter your daughter wrote you from college. You decorate the outside of this cup with a torn family photo and the tangled residue of a broken cassette tape for the ribbon—all of these items you easily find floating in your back yard.

Into this cup you pour

Two cups of water—the elixir of life -- living water,  
    .....Well, yes, it's river water and a little cloudy, but  
    Hey, it's still drinkable—  
    That is if you let the gunk settle to the bottom first.

And you drop in a little sparkle—the joy of finding that your neighbor has returned.... alive, Ah.....  
    But you also drop in a nugget of asphalt for spice,  
    Along with an ugly drop of old oil for spite.

You mix in the honey of remembered friendships that make you smile,  
But into the cup you also wring out a bitter tear or two  
    From your tattered favorite shirt  
    That you found under the upturned chunk of sidewalk.

You pour in a half cup of graded gratefulness for the day's warm sun,  
And for the knowledge that your sister is now safe in Atlanta,  
And for the fact that you have finally found a store  
That will fill your dad's Arthritis prescription.  
...Yes!

Then, on top you sprinkle some  
*semi-toxic-blown-around-the-streets-dust*  
you found gathered at the curb  
—just to add a burnt coffee aroma to the brew,  
A choking smell that burns into your nose  
And stops your breath short.

With a piece of broken board you find in the yard next door,  
You stir all this together,  
Until it turns into a pasty thickness—

Finally, you add a gob of soggy, damp, moldy insulation  
To supply that *whip-cream-topping-cotton-candy* effect.

You warm it all with a caring, *sweaty-t-shirt-hug*  
that you are offered—  
that you relax into,  
because it offers you the fleeting feeling of belonging  
and comfort.

Then, you prepare to drink down your daily concoction—  
A bittersweet, Maundy-Thursday type mixture,  
Reeking of life on the edge of loss, trauma and uncertainty.

You find yourself wondering where you will sleep tonight.

And with an unsteady hand  
you hold this Cup of Contradiction up to the Sun  
and examine it carefully.

Finally ....., satisfied that you cannot see through it  
To the light of the day on the other side,  
You exclaim,

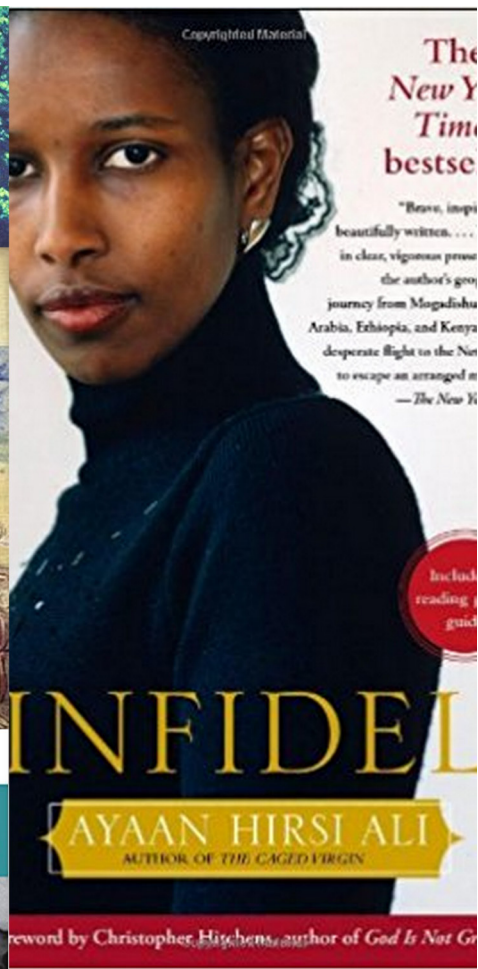
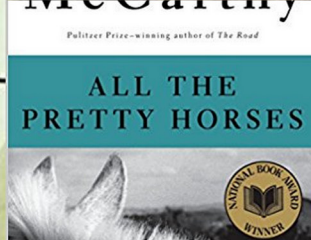
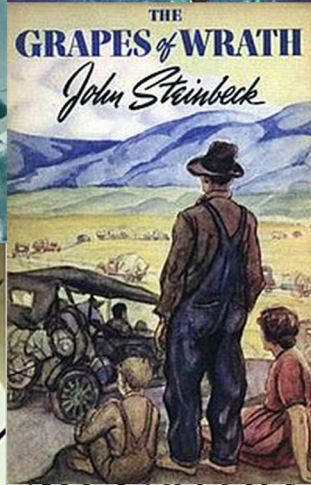
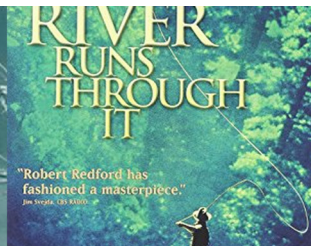
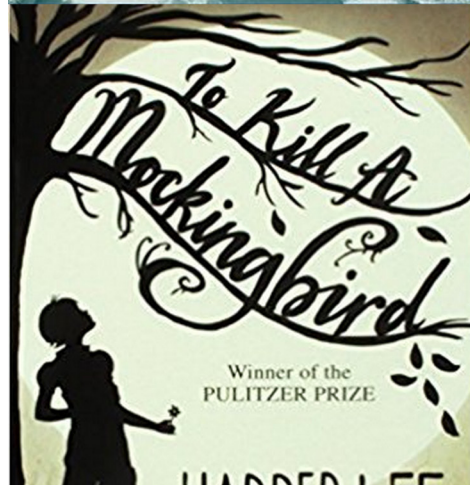
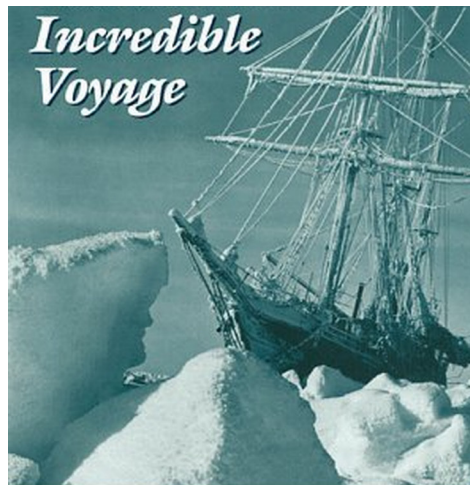
*“Ah.....THIS....IS....  
The real **KATRINA HURRICANE!**”*

Not rational; Not comprehensible; Tough to swallow; Impossible to digest.

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## Reviews from 2004

Is there a typical meeting of the Last Thursday Book Club? A book has been read and the discussion follows. The following provides the journal of six book discussions during the latter half of the year 2004 – egad, we were so much smarter then ...

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*Benjamin Franklin - an American Life* by Walter Isaacson

July 2004

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While today's DNC caucused in Boston, the thirteen (some original) colonists congressed at the home of **Don Benoist**, where they partook of political skewering and praising of a true founding father and grand-father. Walter Isaacson (b. May 20, 1952) tells us there are Franklin-lovers and Franklin-haters, and we learned from some of both. We learned that Franklin retired at age 42, on page 137 at exactly the half-way point of his life, all on a 2-year education. We also learned that Isaacson himself squandered a good Pembroke College/ Oxford (1976) education by accepting employment by both *Time* and CNN. His journalistic style was both appreciated and deplored. Something for everyone. Would it have hurt to have some poetic language ... and a few metrics? How many letters did Franklin write - half as many as Jefferson is famous for, or twice as many? Should there not have been more humor? That bit about Franklin "almost" coming up with the size/concept of a molecule, *that* was a joke, right? Did Franklin (or Mmse. Brillion) invent the lap-dance?

Should a biography stick purely to the subject, or should it provide the reader with descriptions of the environment, give the context in which the subject operates? Isaacson gave us a few teasers, reminding us that at this time, London was the 2nd largest city in the world, yet with population less than 1 million. Philadelphia had 7,000 people when Ben arrived in 1723, although it was growing at 20% per year. And on the cover of 18th Century's *People Magazine*? Men like Franklin, Lafayette, John Paul Jones – there were no professional athletic teams, no rappers, few actors, no rock stars! No NASCAR! However, our own Ben reminds us that there were some leisure activities in the late 18th Century:

In addition to fornication and such, there were spectator sports such as horse racing, boxing, tennis and bowls. Also there were playhouses (remember Shakespeare). Gambling was quite popular. There were some diversions even for geniuses. Franklin was rumored to be a member of the Hellfire club. Might have been better than late night TV.

Men of note were often representative of the Enlightenment, they were true Renaissance men. One could hang a thermometer over the side of the cruise ship and discover the Gulf Stream. What a era of opportunity!

The world was indeed a wonderful oyster for humans to open – the vast unexplored continents of North America, Africa, Australia. Letter writing was an accomplished art – consider Franklin and Jefferson. Ben enjoyed his experiments with electricity, but it had not been twisted into the extreme perversions – there were no e-lectric chairs, no e-mail, no E-Bay, no TIVO. The entire 17th century was pre-

train, so horseback still represented the standard for speed of travel and communications in general. For Philosophy, we had Voltaire. For music, we had Mozart (not mentioned in the book, but as we learned with previous LTBC selection, born: Salzburg, 1756, died prior to end of century), followed closely by Bach and Beethoven. Franklin met and interacted with the author of *The Marriage of Figaro*. In the military, men could still be national heroes, they weren't trying for that 3rd Purple Heart and a trip home - raw animal courage could make a difference – consider John Paul Jones, and before the century was out, by the time of the rise of Napoleon, Horatio Nelson.

Life was far from perfect – it still included terror and terrorism, in the forms of Indians and anti-Indians, superstitions and unfounded fears, slaves and anti-slaves. ... so ... what did you think of the book?

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**Ben:** a readable history, an interesting character. I liked Franklin, I liked the book. **A**

**Ken:** I enjoyed the book and learned quite a bit. I particularly liked the 17 page "Conclusions" section that showed how views of Franklin's accomplishments shifted back and forth with time over the past 200 years. Franklin clearly enjoyed his press clippings and celebrity, ironic considering one of his famous quotes that said "People who are wrapped up in themselves make small packages." I found it interesting that Isaacson seemed to belittle John Adam's diplomatic contributions in France compared to Franklin's. However, according to David McCullough in his recent book on John Adams (p. 267), Adam's advised the French that "nothing would so guarantee a "speedy conclusion" to the war as a powerful French fleet in American waters." The sensational American victory at Yorktown occurred when the French eventually followed Adam's advice. Overall, I enjoyed McCullough's book on Adams somewhat better than Isaacson's book on Franklin (By the way, tourism went way up in the John Adams area of Mass. after McCullough's book became a best seller). **A-**

**Gary:** I did not like the beginning, but found that it laid the foundation for the last half of the book. Note: The "Conference House" referred to in the book, on Staten Island, is only three miles from where I grew up. **A-**

**Tom:** I liked the writing, and learned a lot. Isaacson says the world is divided into Franklin-lovers and Franklin-haters. I'm a hater. The man was personally not that appealing to me; I didn't care for his social philosophy. What was he doing flirting with those little girls, for Lolita's sake? Don't ever compare this man's genius to that of Isaac Newton - Newton invented the Calculus, for Leibnitz' sake! To use a baseball analogy, Franklin was a lifetime .300 hitter who never would have made it into the Hall of Fame on the first ballot. **B+**

**Mike:** Isaacson's rendition is somewhere in between a scholarly work and a folksy story-telling of the life of Ben Franklin. Perhaps the best description of Franklin was by his 14 yr old grandson Benny:

"Very different from other old persons, for they are fretful and complaining and dissatisfied, and my grandpapa is laughing and cheerful like a young person."

It took me a while to realize that his yearly sections were not necessarily unique – some of them overlapped the years – and the sub-titles within the chapters I liked, but I often felt that the book was a modern chugging version of Ben Franklin's life – start and stop, back and fill – rather than a smooth path pressing toward clear pragmatic goals, which Ben Franklin must have felt he was living. Franklin gets an A-A-RP, Isaacson gets a **B**.

**Rob:** The book exceeded my expectations - today you might hear quoted Jefferson or Adams, but seldom Franklin. But I came away impressed with the man. He was negotiating serious policy with France and England while he was flirting with the ladies - the man was excellent at multi-tasking. I think he would have been a first-time ballot winner for Hall of Fame Scientist, Politician, Statesman. The way Isaacson's book was chunked allowed me to read a little, sleep, read some more. **A-**

**Keith:** 500 pages exceeded my capacity, so I read another Franklin biography (by Edmund S. Morgan, c. 2003). There are different types of genius, and Franklin was broad, not deep. Genius comes in many forms. His life was a dazzling dichotomy - he spent 1/3 of his life overseas, yet he is considered the prototypical American.

The dichotomy was from hubris to humility; from myopia to visionary. **B**

**Chuck:** I *did* read the book. I found Franklin to be a very complex character. He was 84 years old at the end of his life, and he had changed his personality several times by then. In many places, Isaacson's work was superficial. **B**

**Charlie:** I would give Franklin an A, and the book a **B+** for many of the reasons previously stated. The facts were there, the author was uncritical of Franklin's foibles. He didn't point out Franklin's problems, he remained distant.

**Bill:** I really liked the *Autobiography* - as you might suppose, there he doesn't say much bad about himself. He was my hero - may not have been telling all the truth, but he made me appreciate his cleverness. Part 1 (of Isaacson's book) was the *Autobiography*. If I knew I could give a grade without reading the book, I would have stayed with that. The last part was good! But not finding my hero in the book, I have to give it a **C**.

**Jack:** I read the *Autobiography* 40 years ago - so this was a good way to learn more, perhaps the truth, about Franklin. He was not particularly a likeable character, but a fascinating one. **A-**

**Joel:** Fascinating. My previous knowledge of Franklin turned out to be very limited. He was an amateur scientist, like the section in *Scientific American*, where home-brew experiments are described. He didn't know, he hoped he was making progress. The book itself was relatively superficial. **A-**

**Don:** I didn't know what to expect when I started reading the book. The Ben Franklin we learned about in grade school wasn't who the man was - he had much more range. He excelled in so many fields. I was very pleased to learn more about him in the book, and from everyone's discussion here tonight, with many ideas coming into play. **A-**

*Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi

August 2004

(special treat: tour of the Triple R Museum)

With the recitation of the *Qu'ran* chanted in the background, the seven pagan sons and three true apostles of the Prophet wrenched their way through revolution and demagoguery in the Smithsonian-featured confines of the Triple R Museum. The Rs, Richard Rinehart and Rob, toured the new converts through floors of 19th century tools, early 20th Century toys and obscure novels, late 20th Nautilus equipment, and 1920s Ford trucks and Studebaker, with a '62 Impala convertible thrown in for nostalgia. A 10,000 lb 1895 steam engine tractor was discovered which



apparently had been recently used to crush several Dixie Chicks. Or perhaps their CDs.

We learned that Azar Nafisi was born in Iran around 1954 and while her father was mayor of Tehran, was sent to study in England at age 13. She returned to Iran at age 17 as her father was imprisoned by the Shah, and experienced much of the revolution which deposed the Shah in 1979, as well as the return of the Ayatollah Khomeini and the subsequent 8 years war with Iraq (1980-1988).

The group had much heated discussion, some of which was actually centered on the book.

**Chuck:** When I started reading the book, I liked it very much - the *Gatsby* section, and *Lolita* was also well suited. That's the last I liked the book. The author insisted on forcing connections to novels (I won't say obscure again) and brought me to where I didn't like it. **B-**

**Don:** I was a little upset through the *Lolita* part - I thought I would get dead tired of all these women's meetings going on - however, as I got deeper into the book, I appreciated the insight on how women are treated under Islam. I was informed of how the movement was allowed to grow as different groups came together. It was enlightening and I began to accept the author's long dissertations on how she reacted to the influence of the state. I give it an **A-**

**Tom:** I liked it as an informative memoir. I learned what life was like under the Islamic Republic, but the book became repetitive as it went over the same ground while blending the lessons of literature into life. The author had a formula and insisted on following it through the book. **B**

**Ben:** I liked it pretty well - an innovative device that worked very well. The part about James was appropriately ambiguous. Coming from a family of all females (except me), I could sympathize with the ladies. I'd give it a **B+**

**Charlie:** It was good as an informative memoir. Also as a personal look at relationships. Too literary for me, twice as long as it should be: **B-**

**Rob:** (from *NY Times* Yardley review: "The book is in the first 80 pages: satisfying yet disorganized."). The influence of the book was not just with Nafisi as a teacher but the insight by her students. Very good in the first two parts, then the book got away from the book club and the teaching, and focused too much on Nafisi in the second half: **B**

**Ron:** I thought it was a remarkable book – she took her experience and expertise in English literature and used it as a way to tell her story. The way this framework allowed her to share her story and her own situation was remarkable. But tough to get through the book, I found myself racing through the literature descriptions, looking for the kernels of interest such as the women's insight into life under the Islamic Republic, e.g., wearing the burqa and interacting with the religious regime. Writing was very good, pleasant to read. I give it a **B+**

**Keith:** My high expectations, of a memoir by literata - with suppressed nubile women - were not met. The words I wrote to describe it: didactic, dilatory, dry, and disjointed: showed her own development as a high-falutin' literary critic. She dropped the women at the end (similar to lives at end of *The Perfect Storm*) and just left me hanging. I give her a **C**.

**Mike:** I was amazed that the two hotbeds of revolutionary thought and action in this book were Tehran, and Norman, Oklahoma! And most interesting the "Keystone

Kops" enforcement of the laws within the Islamic Republic, where you could hide your satellite dish and buy western books with little interference. What a paradigm shift! For me, the two most interesting parts of this book were the discourse on *Lolita* as an oppressed female which certainly gave me more insight (along with the quote from Vera Nabokov), and the trial on the novel *The Great Gatsby*. Other than that, the final two of the four sections of the book appeared forced. **B**

**Joel:** This was a hard read: a lot of pages I had to go over more than once. I'll have to read Jane Austen - but my wife agrees with Nafisi: Austen paints the fathers as inept, mothers as social-climbing airheads. The enthusiasm for literature among the Iranian students was amazing. The banality of evil: government was capable of doing great harm - people were picked up for no reason, imprisoned, perhaps shot or "disappeared." Even under a missile attack, life went on - and the people were sending kids off to be martyrs. Amazing book: **A**

**Post Scripts:** 1] *Article Headline:* "Reigning dissident refused to sign relations report" - actually, Nafisi claimed she had not read this report making the case for US to attack Iraq, thus did not feel she wanted to take sides/sign.

2] No one brought up during the meeting about how such experiments as that of the Islamic Republic are wonderful arguments for the separation of church and state.

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***From the missing members:***

Well gang I either screwed up or this is an initiation for the new member. I took the instructions given (near 2nd and Claremont) and looked at the Website which also said at 2nd and Claremont and showed the red dot on the Mapquest map as at 2nd and Claremont. So I went to 2nd and Claremont and didn't see the RRR Museum. I drove around for 10 minutes or so and asked several people (two thought I was looking for drugs) but no one had ever heard of the Museum. I went into Pastian's Bakery (a block north) and again none of the 4 people inside knew where it was (and no phone number was listed in either the White pages or the Yellow pages under Museums). At this point I threw in the towel but, given that I was in Pastians and my anticipatory dessert juices were flowing, I bought several desserts to soothe the stomach. Unfortunately none of the 4 people in Pastians wanted to discuss *Reading Lolita in Tehran*.

As for the book, my comments follow:

Although the book seemed long-winded at times (especially in the early sections), I found it quite a bit more interesting when discussing life in Iran. Given the 350 pages I would have hoped to learn more about life in Iran and more about the author's background. I was somewhat frustrated by the lack of continuity in the story-line and the sometimes awkward paragraph structure. Many of the book discussions (*Lolita*, *Great Gatsby*) reminded me of lit classes I had taken decades ago when I hadn't read the book being discussed, couldn't really understand the teachers' lectures and would therefore crouch down in the back of the class so the teacher wouldn't call on me. In fact I haven't read *Lolita* and it is definitely a mistake to read this book before reading *Lolita* since much of *Lolita's* plot is divulged.

Thankfully my short-term memory has degraded to the point that I'll be able to read *Lolita* in the not-too-distant future without recalling what was in fact divulged. Overall I found the book boring at times, yet there were so many interesting passages and anecdotes, that I still felt it was a good read. **B+**

- Ken

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Hi Mike,

Susan brought "*The Book Club Cook Book*" to her meeting (The Springfield Book Club). The ladies were most excited about the LTBC book mark with the 75 top books. Of course they did not realize that they were the top 75 macho books. They wanted to copy the list, but Susan suggested the LTBC web site for a more readable copy.

The group did not want to read "*Reading Lolita in Tehran*" because one member did not like "*Lolita*." That is the trouble with the ladies book club, they seem to require unanimous approval for any selection. The men each pick a book of their choosing for our book club. Otherwise you get into a majority dictatorship and never try anything unusual.

"*Reading Lolita...*" is an interesting book with feminist perspective. Our Men's club has to read macho books and prove our independence from the feminist dominated Springfield Book Club.

It was great to attend the July meeting with you and share the discussion of *Franklin*.

Tomorrow we head to Alaska so I won't make the August meeting. "*Reading Lolita in Tehran*" is a very thought provoking book. Nafisi's descriptions of the Islamic revolution were so vivid and gave me a feeling for all revolutions. She clearly explained the mental struggles of herself and her students. She made me understand the feminist point of view better and showed how we can look at characters from different directions. I enjoyed the quote from Nietzsche on page 180, about fighting monsters and looking into an abyss. We all fight monsters and look into abysses. The only complaint that I have is that after 290 pages, I have not mastered the list of her students. I wish that I had written comments about each student as they were introduced and discussed and would recommend doing so for any new reader of the book. I am looking forward to reading the last 50 pages on the way to Juneau. My grade for the book is **A**.

Best wishes,

- Gary

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### *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* - Sept 2004

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#### *Last Wednesday trumps First Debate*

Apparently the Liberal Media wanted to disenfranchise the Last Thursday Book Club members of this Battleground State by sneaking in the First Presidential Debate right across our established nationally recognized time slot: Last Thursday, 30 Sept, 7 pm. Well, Bill Nelson did not let them get away with it. At least eight of us proved to be agile, mobile, and (at times) hostile. We eight stalwarts of the LTBC caucused pre-debate on Wednesday, yes, Wednesday - unfortunately, Ron B. could not attend, as he was at a "Free The Dixie Chicks" Rally.

The LTBC discussions strayed often from the topic, but for the most part stayed away from politics as Bill gallantly steered us back to China and the book. Bill states the book is reviewed in "*The Book Club Cookbook*" and that he and wife Randi enjoyed listening to it by "Books on Tape" reading, learning about life under Mao.

The translation by Ina Rilke resulted in her receiving the prize in 2002 for "best translation of French book." We learned from Bill's map a smattering of the majestic sweep of history in China, to include:

- 5000 BC: farmers first grow rice along the Yangtze River - evidence eaten
- 220 BC: foundation laid for the Great Wall
- 219 BC: Great Wall breached by paying off the guards
- 2 AD: population of China already at 57 million people



584 AD: grand canal established, before Joseph Smith & "The Map..."

690 AD: rule by the only female ruler of China, before Dixie Chicks

1086 AD: population now at 108 million

We also learned that Balzac lived from 1799 to 1850 and wrote 100 novels and short novels – long before he was "immortalized" in the Marian the Librarian song in the musical, "The Music Man."

Two of our members in attendance (Ken and Don) have visited China, and both spoke of the Gen Joe Stillwell museum in Chungking and the nine airfields that the people built in 90 days. When they finally focused, the LTBC members gave mixed reviews:

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**Ben:** Liked it, interesting story, in a country we really don't know about. It was funny, yet sad. I was let down at the end, when Little Seamstress was off to the city to see what price she could obtain for women's beauty. **B+**

**Ken:** Really enjoyed it. The humor was reminiscent of Dave Barry, especially how the author would return to humorous themes like "I again played for them *Mozart is Thinking of Chairman Mao*." I learned a little about the country (I recommend visiting the Gen Joe Stillwell museum in Chungking.) The book was a fable more than a novel, and a novella: a great story but too short. Overall: **A-**

**Rob:** I probably should not read the dust jackets; this one said "Enchanting!" I kept waiting to be enchanted and it never happened. A thin book with a thin story. What made it a best seller? **C+**

**Tom:** Entertaining, but certainly not momentous. Read like a fairly simple fable. The climatic scenes leading to an abortion was odd - thin: **B-**

**Mike:** Some real similarities to *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, and some real differences. In a way, the two young men were being punished for the sins of their fathers.

Interesting interplay between Luo and the narrator – making the narrator hesitant, shy, the geek of the two, made for an interesting duo, and then trio with the Little Seamstress. Quite a unique approach for a book about books. Excellent start – like so many books – with the village headman discoursing over the violin. I thought this would become a theme of the book, about the backwards culture and the superstitions of the farm people. Picked it up some with the drinking of the bull's blood, but was more a book about the age-old theme of boy meets girl, boy loses girl. The abortion search was most interesting – usually you have all these characters seducing the young women, and no one gets diseases, or gets pregnant. Here, it happened – and it was very clever plot twist to trade a book or two for the abortion. But strangely, it made you applaud abortion as the only way for the Little Seamstress to survive her culture. **B-**

**Don:** Character development was not well done. Most of my concerns have been mentioned (above). I got more out of last month's look at a totalitarian regime. **B-**

**Joel:** It was an entertaining book. Couldn't decide if it was a French book or a Chinese book. The engineer in me was reminded of Click and Clack reporting on Car Talk (NPR): "The French copy no one, and no one copies the French." The example is the Renault, with 3 lug nuts - won't fit on the standard tire stand. The book shows well how the culture has not changed that much: naked men still pulling chunks of coal by hand, with clothes off to keep them from getting filthy; and people boiling clothes for relief from a lice infestation. Fun, but less profound. **B**

**Bill:** Randi and I really enjoyed listening to it - humorous, fun to listen to and a quick read. I'll admit I was a little shocked when I saw how small/short a book it was in the hard copy form. The book opened my eyes to the Cultural Revolution. I will give a lesser grade to reading (A-) than to listening (A).

**Note:** The Club determined that a quorum would not be available for the Pagosa Springs weekend of 16 Oct, and will request that Keith consider hosting at home on following Thursday (22 Oct).

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*From the missing members:*

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Dear LTBC:

Susan and I will represent you at the USAFA-USNA football game.

Dai Sijie's "Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress" is an enjoyable book. It is a charming story about a time of great catastrophe. The author has an enormous sense of humor and treated every anecdote in a light-hearted way. Perhaps it gives insight to how the oriental mind can deal with sorrow and hardship. Dai is somewhat like Nabokov in his ability to find humor everywhere even under extreme conditions. Dai's book is so much more cheerful than Nafisi's "Reading Lolita in Tehran." Both authors survive their revolutions and emigrate, but Dai does it laughing. Grade A-

We will be in Death Valley for the October meeting, but I am most of the way through "An Invitation to a Beheading." I'll be thinking of you and the beautiful Autumn in Pagosa.

Best wishes,  
Gary

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Dear Mike:

Sorry I will miss the book club meeting tonight. We're still back east. Should be home within the next 10 days.

I enjoyed *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*. Like *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, it provided some insight into life under a dictatorship, highlighting the strength of the human spirit and the universality of mankind. Additionally, like *Reading Lolita*, it seemed to end abruptly, giving the impression the story was unfinished, which may be as it should be. I give it a B+.

Looking forward to next month's meeting.

Jack

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### *Invitation to a Beheading - Oct 2004*

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#### *Kerry Activists Kidnap Kafka Fan*

In an unprecedented move to convert voters, Kerry family cousins living on Parkside Circle in Southeast Albuquerque apparently swooped down on an unsuspecting member of the Last Thursday Book Club as he circled the bases in a vain attempt to reach sanctuary in the Luau Room of the Keith Gilbert *Home and Roadrunner Wilderness Area*. Some tap-tapping was heard throughout the evening, but Cincinnatus Ferrell was not sighted again - however, a mysterious

cell-phone message was received from C-2. "By myself," said Jack. "What a silly boy," said M'sieur Gilbert. "Step back a little, gentlemen."

At that moment, little Emmie Genoni provided additional biographical background on V. Nabokov. The book, which does not exist in the Rio Grande Library System, was written in Russian, in Germany, in the 1930's. Was this a response to the Stalinist pogroms? or perhaps ... Was not the book a Freud dream interpretation, queried Ben? Tom reminded us that Nabokov hated Sigmund Freud - every one of his books is dedicated to his wife Vera, and almost every Foreword includes a thinly-veiled Freud slam - in this one he says of the book,

"It is a violin in a void... No clubwoman will thrill. The evil-minded will perceive in little Emmie a sister of little Lolita, and the disciples of the Viennese witch-doctor will snigger over it in their grotesque world of communal guilt ..."

For the record, Ben and Mike did indeed perceive in little Emmie the foreshadow of little Lolita. Ken noted that each Chapter was a new day, and the pencil reduced in length along with C's life. Easterling and Genoni saw the morphing of several characters, sometimes separate individuals, sometimes obviously the same: the director, Rodion the guard, the lawyer. Many of us enjoyed the humor - all the characters were clowns except for Cincinnatus ... and perhaps little Emmie. Dang, I liked the down on her little arms ...

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**Joel:** With apologies to Burkingetti - this book was a "*Devil's Island of the Mind*" (allusion to Ferlinghetti's "*A Coney Island of the Mind*," a seminal work of the hipster/beatnik era). An unpleasant book. I would rate it a **B-** but I would re-rate after I re-read. My impression now is unsatisfying, too surreal.

**Rob:** My standard for the surreal is *Bluefeather Fellini*. This book never made me stop and ponder the deeper meaning - and I did not want to dig it out. As a book, I didn't enjoy reading it a lot. **B-**

**Ben:** I kind of liked it - more like a dream - involving family he didn't like, a mother he didn't know, a wife he didn't trust. I liked it: **A-**

**Tom:** As an unabashed Nabokov groupie, this book struck a chord in me - but I like all of his books. I felt like I was going in and out of his dreams - when I finished the book, I wanted to read it again. **A**

**Ron B:** I couldn't really get into it, too surreal for me - didn't want to get too much into it. A period piece, art, but not my cup of tea - as a work as a whole, not that interesting. **C**

**Ken:** I'm a Nabokov virgin - I didn't know what to expect - but I would read something and kept going back, at times realizing something was beautifully written - "This is incredible!" - makes me want to read it again, and read what apparently is a classic for the Club, *Lolita*. **B+**

**Mike:** While reading the book, I thought of Patrick McGoochan in [The Prisoner](#) series, also quite surrealistic and dream-like, sometimes comical, and wondered if the series was inspired by this book. I really liked the humor in the book - the chess game where M'sieur Pierre is doing both the color commentary and the play by play is hilarious, like playing chess with one of your mouthy lawyer-like kids. The irony of thinking someone is tunneling to save C., and it turns out to be the only other inmate with the director - that was great. Having said that: overall, the book

was not compelling for me, and I had trouble keeping up with the surrealism of C-1 and C-2. **B**

**Charlie:** I give it a **B**, as the average of what I really thought of the book, and what I heard/appreciated from the discussion tonight. An excellent example of the value of our Club: I would not have read the book if not an LTBC selection, and I would not have appreciated it without our discussion. A much better book than I can appreciate.

**Keith:** I am unabashedly, irrationally mesmerized by Nabokov - a word genius. Every word is poetry, and like the notes in Mozart's music, not one word would I change. **A**

*Note: the question was raised during the meeting as to whether the translator, Dimitri Nabokov, lives on. Vladimir married Vera in 1925 and they had one child, Dimitri. Most intriguing is [this e-mail message](#) from Dimitri, praising Azar Nafisi's view of **Lolita**, which we read in our [August selection](#). So as of last year, Dimitri still lives, where his parents died, in Montreaux, Switzerland.*

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<from our inactive reserve, 23 Oct 2004>

Dear Readers,

The Red Sox still need to win four games this week to end the curse.

I enjoyed "*Invitation to a Beheading*." It is an allegory, a dream-like portrayal of life in a totalitarian state. The consideration shown to Cincinnatus by his keepers is bizarre and not typical of real treatment to prisoners or citizens. Perhaps Nabokov is ridiculing the power of the state.

The weakness of Cincinnatus is symbolic of passive citizenry, whom Cincinnatus, the ideal citizen-farmer-soldier of ancient Rome overcame. Nabokov must be saying that oppressed people just need to decide to be free.

This is not my favorite Nabokov book. "*Lolita*" and "*Glory*" were better.

Grade **B+**

Wish I could be with you.

Gary

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Dear Mike,

Sorry I missed the meeting. Was looking forward to the discussion and sharing in Ben's jubilation over the Red Sox win. Next time I'll use MapQuest or carpool.

Enjoyed the book and came to appreciate it even more after trying to deal with Presbyterian Healthcare and Tricare over a billing issue earlier in the day. That was then followed by my attempt to navigate in complete darkness through the polyhedron to Keith's house.

In any event, I agree with those who compare the world Nabokov describes in *Invitation to a Beheading* to the one Kafka's protagonist encounters in *The Trial*, in which the struggle for justice pits an individual against a baffling bureaucracy. Additionally, I saw parallels between *Invitation to a Beheading* and the last two books we read, where the liberating aspects of imagination played important roles. **A-**

Hoping in November to make my way in that direction where, to judge by the voices, stand beings akin to me.

Jack

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*Disgrace* - Nov 2004

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Eight dirty dogs sniffed their way into the beautiful White Oaks home of Host Ken.

They came disheartened and reeking of turpitude but not yet in despair. With South African [Soetkoekies](#) awaiting the outcome, the soulless members "usurped upon a living thought that never more could be."

We learned that South Africa is the number three [murder capital of the world](#), behind Columbia (#1) and Swaziland (#2), the latter sharing a bloody border with #3. We learned that chasing [car-jackers](#) in Capetown is a two-person affair, with one as driver and one manning the machine gun. We heard that 7000 South Africans applied for amnesty after Nelson Mandela ascended into leadership, yet according to the [Final Report](#) of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, only 125 were granted.

We felt much from this book by JM Coetzee, many themes, to include the redistribution of wealth, the battle for control by Arrogance and Eros, the question of whether apparent choices are actual choices, the deadening power of inertia. It evoked the helplessness of a Kafka (1883-1924, died of pneumonia) novel and evoked strong feelings from the members.

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**Jack:** This book is hard to classify - a very powerful story - and very disturbing. It dealt with human relationships, yet the conclusion you come to is, "There is no higher life - this is the life and we live it with and like the animals." Yet I really enjoyed reading it. As one approaching/past middle age, I give it an **A**. Coetzee may have been born in Capetown, educated in Texas, and live in Australia, but he is a German cynic at heart.

**Joel:** Fascinating, but somewhat repelling - David violated the taboo between teachers and students - disturbing but fascinating. **A-** (my wife would not recommend this book to her club - found it horrid.)

**Don:** I'm afraid I just don't go with the rest of the crew. The book was thought provoking, so absorbing of everything. I think our lives ought to be different, this is not the way to look at life or let life treat us. Most of these characters had chances to improve their lives - but wouldn't do it. Couldn't do it? Baloney! I admire the man's ability to capture this story, but my heart goes down to the ground - goes down to the daughter, as she talks her father into staying out of her life. Too disturbing, not a valid piece of literature. B- or C+ ? **C+**

**Tom:** I think it was uplifting. I watched my sports team (*the San Francisco Bushbucks*) go down, and this book cheered me right up. It contained two stories: of South Africa, but also of mid-life crisis. Coetzee's writing, sentences were terse - different sentence structure than other writers - not so overly mechanical. **A-**

**Mike:** **D** is for *Disgrace*. **D** is for David and his daughter - for the dogs and the dying, and for the dying dogs. **D** is for despair, disheartening, desperation. **D** is for Desiree and desire. **D** may be indeed be a theme, but it is not a grade for this book.

This is a book I will remember for some time. It taught me, it angered me, it frustrated me. Why did David go back and visit Melanie's parents? Did that make any sense? (It did make sense that he would surreptitiously watch Melanie in the

play). David, David, why didst thou forsake the little dog, which, like Lord Byron had a club-foot, perhaps the only sentient being that enjoyed your opera? B+ or A- ? **A-**

**Ben:** Dismal story, with redemption at the end. David found a humbling purpose to his life: clean up dogs. **A-**

**Ron B:** Well written book by a good author, but I would not want to read another of his books ! Irony: easy reading, but not a simple book. I didn't understand the motivation of his daughter. David did have concern for his daughter. Her calling him "*David*" may have implied some difficult childhood issues. They still have issues - he could stay, but ... Not an uplifting book, but dealt with David's spiral down - he did get compassion for animals. I'd give it an **A**: well crafted, well written - hooks together all the themes of the book.

**Keith:** David was an aging Lothario, of waning magnetism. Short poem by Byron may be the lynchpin:

*STANZAS FOR MUSIC*

*There be none of Beauty's daughters  
With a magic like thee;  
And like music on the waters  
Is thy sweet voice to me;*

*When, as if it sound were causing  
The charmed oceans pausing,  
The waves lie still and gleaming,  
And the lulled winds seem dreaming;*

*And the midnight moon is weaving  
Her bright chain o'er the deep;  
Whose breast is gently heaving,  
As an infant's asleep.*

*So the spirit bows before thee,  
To listen and adore thee;  
With a full but soft emotion,  
Like the swell of summer's ocean.*

- Lord Byron

There was a strong ying and yang of David and his daughter: David was very rigid in his beliefs, his daughter was infinitely malleable, she would roll with the punches.

Well written book, actual poetry in some cases. **B**

**Ken:** after reading Nabokov and Coetzee, I agree, both are well written. I enjoyed the book, so much action, so much happening. I had the feeling of the 52 year old: approaching the end of his career, he would never finish the opera. Pipe dream, like my own pipe dreams, things I won't get gone. I didn't like his visiting Isaacs. **A-**

**Keith:** There are two kinds of great novels - those that envelop you in warmth, comfort, a place you want to be, and those that create an uncomfortable place that you know you don't want to be in. *Disgrace* was the latter.



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Please mark me traveling for Nov (Las Vegas) and Dec (Grand Canyon).

*Disgrace* was a shocking book, but one that was hard to put down. In short, Disgrace = dismay, dishonor, disheartening - two generations of dysfunctionals in a disintegrating society. **B+**

Looking forward to attending your retirement party. Thanks for the invitation.

Have a good Thanksgiving and Christmas.

*Bill Nelson*

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Dear Readers:

My review:

"*Disgrace*" is a very strange tragedy. David Lurie is the typical proud protagonist. His actions seem so foolish. Perhaps being able to anticipate the fall and decline of proud men makes tragedies so attractive to readers.

The saga of Lucy is a greater puzzle to me. There seems to be little motivation for Lucy to remain on the farm. Coetzee uses Lucy to heighten the fall of David. He also uses Lucy to show how innocent people suffer in turmoil. David and Petrus are the principal villains. Petrus is cunning and successful. David is brilliant and short-sighted. The book raises a lot of questions about relationships and responsibilities. It makes us think about subjects that we like to avoid. Grade **A-**

*Gary*

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### ***Seven Pillars of Wisdom - A Triumph - Dec 2004***

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In the name of God the merciful, the loving-kind. We were nine in Wejh. And just before dawn, Auda said, "Let us make a raid upon Stalgren Court this Thursday." And we said, "in the name of God."

And we marched and we marched, and the land was barren, and we heard nothing.

And Auda said, "By God, you are right. We know not of the ancestry of Orens."

And so it was told that El Orens was of Thomas Chapman, as the 2nd illegitimate son of this landed Englishman in Ireland, and the 2nd son of Sarah Lawrence, originally hired as governess of Thomas' four daughters. Thomas left his wife to live with Sarah; they moved to Wales and had a total of four sons. Lawrence spent a lengthy walking tour in Syria and Jordan, and later in his archaeology work, learned to work with the Arabs without the use of the British military.

... and the young sheikh Kenny G. provided this link to David Fromkin's excellently written view of T.E. Lawrence and his life:

<http://www.newcriterion.com/archive/10/sept91/fromkin.htm>

David Fromkin is a Professor of History at Boston University and has written several books about the first World War and the Middle East ("*A Peace to End All Peace: Creating the Modern Middle East 1914-1922*").



And the stories told by the fire that night were plentiful and by the end of Thursday, by God, by my God, by very God, the sun rose upon us all.

**Non** nobis Domine!— Not unto us, O Lord!

**Joel:** Fascinating book, slow to read. If I mapped battles, I could recreate the campaign. I would rate as an **A**. This is a significant book, if someone annoying.

**Ron B.:** I was annoyed right from the beginning. Preface by "T.E. Shaw" - who? Gave a list of all the chapters, which is good, but "*Seven Pillars*" as title, because he once wrote a book called "*Seven Pillars*" and liked the title? I had the feeling that Lawrence was bi-polar, or on too much caffeine. He writes what he wants. A significant book, not history so much as how the events strung together. Interesting, but was I learning anything or wasting my time? As a read (not historically) I give it a **B**.

**Ken:** Very mixed emotions- I found the first 50 pages or so very tedious and would have stopped reading except for my LTBC responsibilities. Good decision since the book began to become more interesting. It was hard to keep track of the characters and places since the new and mostly strange names kept pouring out page after page. The continuing detailed descriptions on the flora, fauna and landscape traversed in Lawrence's journeys became so boring that I started to skip over many such paragraphs after the first 100 pages. These omissions made the pages go by quicker and focussed my attention on the more interesting story-line and anecdotes (e.g., "Feasting", Chapter XLVI). Lawrence's writing style is both elegant and sometimes difficult to understand perhaps due to differences between "British English" and "American English" or perhaps due to my failure to master either. With this ongoing handicap, I clearly look forward to the next LTBC selection (*Beowulf*). Grade: **B**

**Keith:** Not a book for the common man. A vomitorium of places - and I'm looking for decimal places. I learned a word: *midden* (refuse pile). I'm giving it a **C** just to get some dessert. The book is a classic but not for me.

**Ben:** I liked it better as I got into it - very British - Ken, you had trouble with all the people, but I had trouble with all the Wadis. The writing was very good, the descriptions of sickness were well done. **A-**

**Jack:** I fall somewhere in between Joel and Keith - a couple of insightful passages, but overall I found it very difficult, and I found it annoying. **C+**

**Charlie:** Very difficult to read, wasn't fun. It is an important book but I would not recommend it. But I'm glad I read it once. **B**

**Tom:** I finished the entire book, but did a disservice by pushing through the last half. I did find some of the sentence construction difficult, but going back over it found it elegant. Going back through it, I found interesting discussions of people. The battles worked to advance the storyline. The guy is brilliant, the writing is beautiful.

The book could really improve from an editor's touch - today an editor would cut out one third. **B**

**Rob:** Just like *Magister Ludi*, I was captivated by this book. Provided insight into the British and Semite religious cultures. I floated over some of it. Lowell Thomas helped to publicize Lawrence. I checked out and watched the '62 movie last week, and I liked the book more - O'Toole gave Lawrence a dazed, confused look in the movie - the 'real' Lawrence was much more interesting. One example: the way he described the beating in Naraa. **A**

**Mike:** When Malachy McCourt complained that he did not remember being anywhere as poor as described in *Angela's Ashes*, Frank responded that the book was a memoir, not a history. Same is true of *Seven Pillars*, as Lawrence reminds us many times. This is a wonderful book, beautiful writing, humorous and clever anecdotes from a brilliant linguist and leader. I read this book 40 years ago, and never forgot its impact. I don't give an "A" lightly, and this is an **A** book.

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*And from beyond Mecca*

Dear Readers,

"*Seven Pillars of Wisdom*" is an amazing book. T.E. Shaw's description of the manuscripts in the Preface makes you wonder how such a long book could be written with so much detail. As I reread the Introductory Chapter, I noticed that Lawrence said that he changed the names to protect identities. An Amazon reviewer wrote "It has been proven by historians (e.g. Lawrence James) that Lawrence not only embellished, but fabricated in toto his so-called exploits, depravations and exploitations in the Middle East." I do not endorse that review, but Lawrence's descriptions of so many incidents and so many locations were filled with enormous detail. I attributed these embellished descriptions to the similarity of places or perhaps repeated visits to places or repeated activities in camp.

I introduce the Amazon review to show other people thought that Lawrence could not remember so much detail. We had trouble today remembering what we did each day this week in Pasadena. Of course Lawrence was younger when he wrote the book than I am today. Maybe he had a photographic memory. He also went through a couple drafts. Each draft may have reinforced his recollection of facts, or reinforced his images of places and events. Sometimes people decide what must have occurred rather than remembering events. They reject their memories in favor of the logic of what should have occurred. Then their memories adopt the logical sequence of events. This is like the mind completing an image from eyes with blind spots from a nuclear detonation, laser injury, etc. Anyhow I liked the book and the beautiful writing and do not dispute the events or the history.

The book gives an insight into the Arab mind, behavior and culture. The Arab people living in the desert surely have not changed. I wonder how educated Arabs have changed, if at all. We all carry our cultural baggage with us through life. As far as the book goes, it is written almost poetically, with beautiful descriptions of places and events. If the book is not accurate, it is at least charming.

Unfortunately, it is long and difficult to read since the names and places are unfamiliar and numerous. I cannot read the maps, so I am confused with the locations. Overall I give the book a **B+** for the beautiful and different writing.

Gary

---

Non nobis, Domine, Domine,  
Non nobis, Domine,  
sed nomini, sed nomini, tuo da gloriam.

*Translation:*

Not unto us, O Lord, O Lord  
Not unto us, O Lord  
But unto thy name, But unto thy name, give glory

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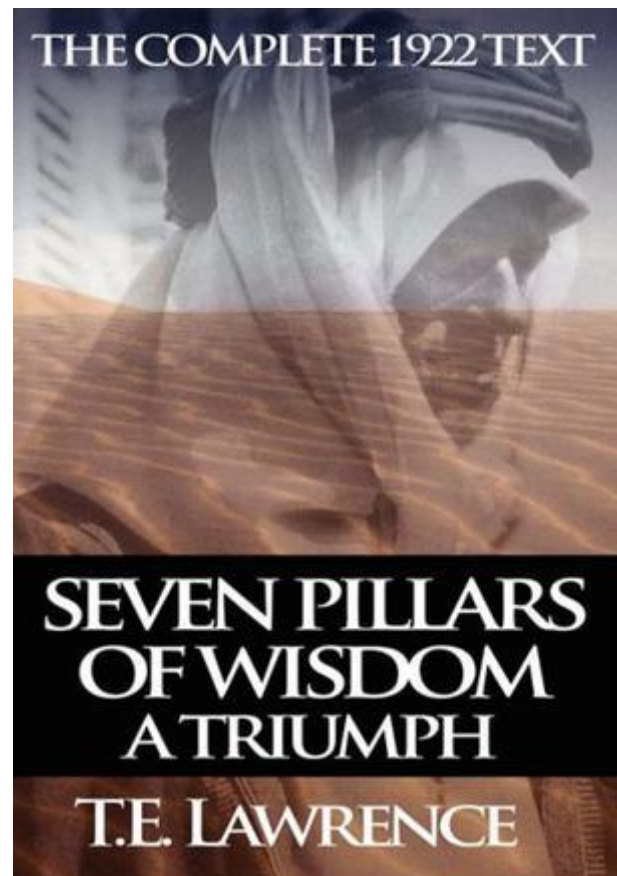
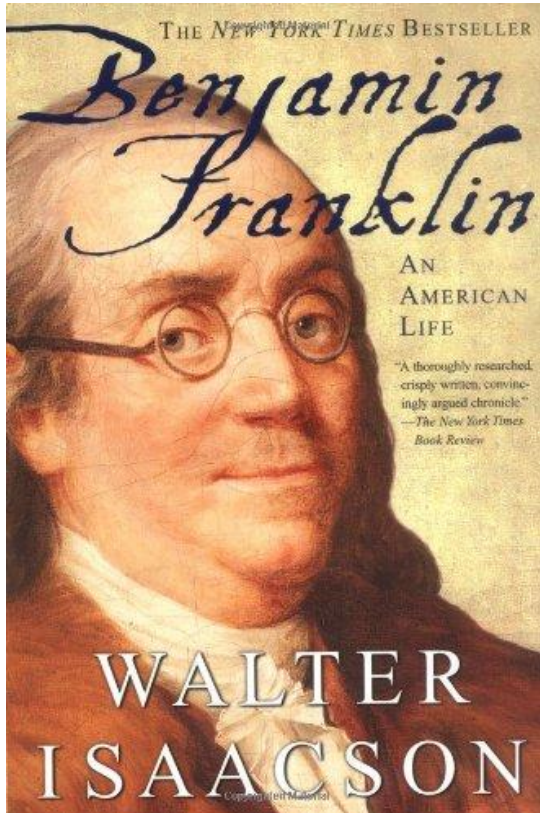
*Closing remarks from [David Fromkin](#):*

As a citizen of the twentieth century, Lawrence valued history little and entertainment a great deal. Fiction is stranger than truth, and T. E. found it more fun: due to him, there are those who

believe that Damascus was liberated in 1918 by a band of Arabs led by someone who looked like Peter O'Toole.

It is as a voice of our time that he is certain to be heard. As other men lust for power or wealth or women, he craved to be noticed and to be remembered—and he was and he is, and he will be.

*Here endeth the reviews of July 2004 - December 2004.*



## Inspired Reviews

*by Keith Gilbert*

Some books are art, some inspire art. This collection of poetic reviews by the Poet Laureate of the Last Thursday Book Club were each inspired by a selection of the month.

***Lolita*** by Vladimir Nabokov (*October 1998*)

### High Reflections on Lo

Twas nigh on fifty years ago  
That Humbert, a pervert he;  
Longed for his Lo  
So long and deep  
And diddled her with lust 'n glee.

Lo - a pubescent lass, pre-teen  
He fondled her where she'd never been  
Lolita, Light of his Life, Fire in his dong,  
Old Hum plucked her deep, he plunked her long,  
Twiddled her strings with sonorous dong.

Seems he couldn't get enough of Lo -  
Traveled together, to and fro -  
Methinks she gave sex for comfort, this little tart  
And he swapped comfort for sex ... but gave his heart.

Alas, both went their separate ways  
Left ol' Hum in a frightful daze.  
He killed Quilty, lost his mind  
And Lo ... another Dick did find!

So, in summary, what sin did old Hum do?  
Well yes, he twiddled 'n fondled our ingénue -  
But in fact Lo was no naive 'n innocent lass -  
She knew how to bounce her boobs and gyrate her ass.

So I ask you ... is old Hum a letch?  
No, rather a moral leper, a bumbling wretch.  
Our dilemma is the man's a jerk  
But the story's a gem, a masterwork.  
In fact, I myself feel slightly queerer  
'Cause I see a bit of me in Nabokov's mirror.

Finally, my grade, a solid "B"  
No timeless message, but a great storee!

***Tuesdays with Morrie*** by Mitch Albom (*June 2000*)

### **Morrie Story**

Tonight we review "Tuesdays with Morrie"  
It's really quite a simple story  
Our dying prof can't walk-the-walk  
So instead he tries to talk-the-talk.

It's neither deep nor too profound  
Though aphorisms do abound  
Our book is fueled by pure emotion  
Alas, for the mind 'tis a tepid potion.

The great Secrets of Life are not found here  
Instead, the secretions of Death I hear:  
Bile, phlegm, poop, and snot  
Imbue the innards of this plot.

Morrie's message: Love's the bottom line -  
Keep Love, give Love, we'll all be fine.  
And as for one's final journey - don't look back  
Just load lots of Love in your back pack.

Grades are rendered by Bibliofools like me  
And old Mitch gets a "Consumptive C."

*The Last Battle* by Cornelius Ryan (*Aug 2001*)

## **Führer & The Fog**

**The fog rolls in**  
**The Führer in his final foxhole**  
**Hunkers in the bunker**  
**A fortnight to finale**  
**Wagner's GotterDammerung flows freely**  
The fulsome, foaming fog of war ...

**Führer's orders: Fight to finish**  
**Starre Verteidigung ... Stand Fast!**  
**General Heinrici ... Capitulate, we are finis**  
**Führer's retort: Keep Faith!**  
The eternally ethereal fog of war ...

**Americans on fast track attack**  
**Reach the Elbe ... no turning back!**  
**Ike gets duped ... a Russky fondle**  
**Stops his foray ... Decides to stay**  
Flummoxed by the Red Fog of War.

**Now Generals Koniev and Zhukov**  
**Whittle down the formerly ferocious Nazis**  
**Zhukov's ploy: A Phalanx of 40,000 pieces**  
**And a thousand arcs of light**  
**To pierce the gloaming fog**  
**And Le Femmes finessed these foglights**  
**Defining Ground Zero for the fiery Deutsche weapons**  
**Alas, only a few survived**  
The fuzzy, feeble, foxy fog of war.

**Der Führer falling further, in a funk**  
**Hunkering in the deepest, darkest recesses**  
**Almost "Speered" by fatal gas**  
**Wafting into his FührerBunker**



**But saved by a new SS flue**

The capricious fog of war.

**Berlin fortifications ... simply wimpy**

**Siegfried, Maginot ... done with mirrors**

**Troops ill-prepared, old veterans of the VolkSturm**

The flimsy, fleeting, flighty fog of war.

**Führer's Fortress ... Gigantic Flak towers**

**His besotted fetid philosophy**

**He squints through the enveloping fog:**

**"Wo ist Steiner? Wo ist Wenke?"**

**Alas he cannot see he's run to empty**

The stifling, churning fog of war.

**Again Führer forbids surrender ... fight on!**

**The final orgasm a ghastly gruel**

**Of gruesome gore 'n guts**

**He finishes self as a crumpled coward**

**A bullet followed by a pill for Eva**

**Folded in rugs and set aflame.**

**Führer saved face – and jaw,**

**The rest was char.**

The deadly, flaming fog of war.

The battle finally finished – its final hour

Herr Heinrich Schwarz ... "Abu, Abu..."

The fluttering stork flies to freedom

And flora flourishes as Berlin's rebirth ensues.

And so, the Fog rolls in, the Fog rolls out

And reminds us just what war's about

Tis not to win or lose, I say

But to survive another day ...

Until the next fog finds us ....!



*To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf (July 2003)

Hark From Hebrides / Isle of Skye To the Darkhouse

*A Stream of Review ...*

Plot is pallid, action is glacial: a story without beginning or end

*Part A*

- \* Mrs Ramsey: serene, maternal ... loved by all
- \* Mr. Ramsey: cold curmudgeon
  - loves wife, but mute
  - sought sympathy, but misogynist: "Women can't paint, can't write"
  - endlessly plans, postpones trip to the lighthouse; dangles offspring on a string
  - kids hate him
- \* Stream of consciousness describes conflicts, tensions, and endless dinner: 10<sup>6</sup> words to capture a simple picture
- \* Mrs Ramsey dies, drying up the stream of consciousness (60% of the book)

*Part B:*

Here the writing is more dynamic but discursive

- \* House deserted/ decays/ creepy creatures invade
- \* Lily Briscoe returns (from where?)
- \* House refurbished; Mr. Ramsey and siblings re-gather (how? from where? )
- \* Lily - Meditation picture: what she sees and loves
- \* Kids again ponder patricide/ but then Mr. Ramsey provides kudos to James
- \* Boat goes to the Lighthouse
- \* Lily's picture is fuzzy as is her vision

My take: a fuzzy journey without end ...

**Seldom Disappointed** by Tony Hillerman (Aug 2003)

## **This Bio Gets No Tony**

A catharsis, purging, lustration of Soul  
Vomits forth from his bowel hole  
Yes, a blizzard of chaff  
Does yield an occasional laugh  
And a few dynamic war vignettes  
But, that's all you gets ... !

Hillerman shows little emotion,  
Seems to jus' go through the motion  
His stream of consciousness clutters my mind  
Rather than cleansing my spirit - that's what I find.

His closing comments on 75 years:  
"They've been far better than anyone deserves."  
Tony, in reading memoirs for a month just last night  
'Tis far more banal than I can recite.

So ... How do I proffer a grade  
To a book that'll rapidly fade -  
Yes, to this same book I'd like to evade -  
Well, guys, me thinks I'll just color it jade!

## **The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon** by Stephen King

Trisha, plucky 9-year old,  
Dysfunctional family  
Weekend hike with feuding mom 'n Bro

Departs trail ... pees, seeks wrong shortcut back ...  
 Lost !  
 Stumble down stream, deeper into darkle ...  
 Help !

Ubiquitous mosquitoes, noseemus, wasps ...  
 Buzzing, gnawing...  
 Tromps thru mud-sucking swamps ...

Waning Walkman wields winning ways  
 via Gordon, Boston reliever #36  
 Inspiration from suds-swilling Dad,  
 plus #1 Bud ... Pepsi  
 Main companions: souging wind, squeaking jays, hammering  
 woodpeckers

Hallucinations, poltergeist music, eviscerated deer, fitful sleep  
 Pitcher Tom's ghostly challenge:  
 Bottom ninth, ursine up close  
 Scofflaw Herricks' serendipitous entry  
 Renders win from big ol' bear

Postgame (hospital) pop-bonding  
 Baseball, luck saved McFarland's tush ... Game over!

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*[Keith challenges the reader to determine the two unique qualities of the above review].*

## Girl With a Pearl Earring

Five Reasons I offer,  
 With wink & twirl  
 These linchpins form my view  
 of the "Girl With The Pearl" ...

- Reason Five: This story's alive ...

Riveting, touching ... Griet and the Master  
Intrigue, near disaster  
Indeed this literary limo's in overdrive!

- Reason Four: I focus on the optics of yore ...

*An obscura camera* in hands of the Master  
Yield insightful perceptions, and more !

- Reason Three: Griet's a riddle in mystery ...

Enigmatic, submissive, quietly perspicacious  
Right up to her surprise finale we see !

- Reason Two: Contrasts - yes, more than a few ...

Servant/Master, Rich/Poor, Catholic/Protestant,  
Light/Dark -  
These serve up to the reader a hearty stew !

- The Final *Raison*, and yes, the real one ...

'Tis Griet's allure, her sexy charm  
Indeed, I'd not dally ... but I'd find an alley  
Lift her skirt, grab her bun and have some fun !

And now friends - my grade - without delay  
'Tis a biblio-jewel ... a solid "A" !

*K. Gilbert - 1/29/4*

## Ode To Maltese Falcon

I love this book, I really do,  
I read it slowly, thru and thru !  
Sam Spade is tough, self-serving, greedy,

He can cuckold his sidekick, then rip the needy.

Both cops 'n thugs Sam seamlessly bluffs -

This gumshoe radiates all the right stuffs.

Murder, betrayal, cunning and rages,

Hammettian vintage is a wine for the ages.

We have creepy Cairo, fat Gutman, weasely Wilmer ... what a trio.

They craft chaotic chemistry, these depraved dynamos ...

con brio !

And beautiful Bridgit with her long, lusty loins,

Alas, her loyalty shifts with each drop of the coins.

Yet, amidst this black bouquet of lollipops,

Sam loves the fight, he shows he's tops.

Spade plants a plan, both bright and bold,

And reels in truth, be it calamitous & cold.

Yea, with both falcon and dove in his quiver,

Sam bags his game, he does deliver!

A final twist - he bombs his Effie's intuition,

Indeed, the redhead murdered Miles ... end of mission !

Thanks for this riveting read - it uniquely engages,

So my grade is an "A," my Last Thursday sages.

- K. Gilbert, 4-29-2004

## Folly Fellacios

As an old soldier

May I be bolder

Barb's 'lil miss folly  
'Tis a strumpet dolly

'Cause our approach to war,  
Is to dance with a whore  
In a slurry of fog  
With her pit bull dog  
And our balls they hangs  
Within reach of it's fangs

Our generals are bright  
But focus on yesterday's light  
Those wars long past  
Are the ones they hold fast  
And their bosses spray blight  
Spewing bad oversight...

So, alas, our Country's viscerals drain  
Into war's mud, shit and rain  
And though it's insane  
I fear 'twil repeat AGAIN and AGAIN..!

PS: Barb's march  
twas flaccid..no starch  
And my grade ..it do be..  
A "noodly" C...kg..!

1-25-06

## White Noise

10/21/06

To plumb this mystic thing - White Noise  
I first asked my good ol' "beer-boozin" boys  
"When you pop a tab,  
The sound you have ... shhhh ... ht  
That foamy report is White Noise."

Next I queried a mega sports buff  
Is White Noise really cool stuff?  
No, he said. But the dribbling sounds  
of Sports Analysts confounds  
And this is my anguishing White Noise.

I sought a physicist's insight  
What is this White Noise "bite"?  
The same energy is found  
In each frequency of sound  
Alas, his "White Noise" shed no light.

I sought Don Delillo's White Noise:  
"Tis Technology, not one of my joys  
Toxic clouds are oft found  
Technology and info abound  
So beware, my biblio-boys."

I saw those damn condos arising next door  
These are no more than rich man's toys.  
Soon I'll be bombarded with tippling and tubbing, carusing and love-ins  
Alas, these will be my noxious White Noise!

Finally I walked down to my River San Juan  
A treasure trove of sights and sounds  
When I put my ear to the flow  
And listened long and slow  
I heard Mother Nature whisper, "Keith  
This is the true White Noise that you seek!"



## **The Things They Carried** *by Tim O'Brien*

Those Things They Carried,  
O'Brien's Motley crew  
Rat, Jimmy, Dobbins,  
And Kiowa the Sioux

They sloughed in Viet Nam ...  
That No Win whore's war  
Full of fog, feces, fear  
... And more

Each humped amulets  
To cope with sheer fear  
Lingerie, letters, Bibles, pebbles ...  
Nothing seemed queer

Through murderous muck and mire  
They slogged thru the slime  
Some persevered ...  
Some ran out of time

Ted Lavender: head shot  
After taking a pee  
And Curt Lemon got offed,  
Blown up in a tree

And even survivors  
Had much life to lose  
So they humped dreams of girlfriends  
And fucking dumb cooze

Even after the war  
Each carried burdens inside  
For the horrors of war  
Do not gently subside

Yes, painful memories linger  
Indelibly writ  
Of war's fogs and fears ...  
And fields of shit

KG 7/26/2007

## **A Thousand Splendid Suns** *by Khaled Hosseini*

**Kabul: Then and Now** *[inspired by the Poem whose translation provided the title to Hosseini's book]* 07/08/08

Ah, Tabrizi's 17th Century Kabul,  
Either Paradise Found ... or its Radiant Jewel.

Its dazzling tulips and redolent roses,  
are sweet simmering opiates to our noses.

In the gardens of Sharbara I bodaciously blush  
From the beauty and fragrance of flora so lush.

And sparking Kabul River, with waters so pristinely pure  
It both slakes my thirst and my maladies does cure.

Its countless trees harbor blizzards of birds,  
Who throat syrupy songs to accompany Tabrizi's sage words

And every Kabulian street is kept clean and trim,  
Full of vendors and caravans, vigor and vim.

People biped safely, day and night  
They walk in harmony, there is no fright.

And many moons shimmer from her roofs by night  
And diurnally 1000 splendid suns climb her walls - what a sight

And Allah's watch over our jewel never does cease  
This Paradise Found of Truth, Beauty and Peace!

---

## (Kabul Now)

Now Hosseini's Kabul teeters on doorsteps to Hell  
Chaos and carnage from its putrid smell

Its tulips dazzleless, its roses shorn  
The garden of Sharbara ... thistles and thorn

The Kabul River runs fetid, in places it ceases  
And where there is flow, 'tis much offal and feces.

Its stately trees felled, as by a jaundiced jihad  
And its beautiful birds gone, no sweet twittering, oh so sad.

All hours missiles and bullets scream overhead  
And determine - Flash! - Boom! - the maimed and the dead

The streets of Kabul are laden with fear  
Only essential trips taken ... grief and trauma so near.

In this Paradise Lost, I asked if they'd dare  
To bring back Truth, Beauty, and Peace - instead of Despair.

"Taliban Truth," they murmured, "are idiots from Hell,  
And Beauty will blossom only if killing we can quell."

"So Allah, pray we, make war soon cease  
Please grant us this ... we only want Peace!"

*K. Gilbert*

### **The Road** *by Cormac McCarthy*

#### **The Road to Nowhere**

Alas, 'tis The Road to Perdition  
Bleak, barren, and dark ... Man's punishment  
A nameless, hopeless, Father and Son  
Breathe despair, and tote one bullet, one gun  
And slog along to complete a doomed mission  
This Book of Doom, Gloom, and Mire  
I now must grade ... and risk your ire  
But oh, my friends, I'm "carrying the fire"  
Which, indeed, will roar much higher  
When with The Road I make a pyre!  
And if my smoke didn't form a "B-" - I be a liar!

### **Winesburg, Ohio** *by Sherwood Anderson*

The Dark Energy of Winesburg  
Those calling Winesburg their home  
Live in a dim, dark catacomb.

This sullen small town, down in its dives  
Forlorn folks just schlepping out their lives.

Two themes dominate - the first: actions unrequited.  
The second: most characters are half-witted.

Grim and gloomy, melancholy too  
Quite sunless I fear - all black and blue.

Relationships are sad, indeed morose  
This town's so grim there's ner a ghost

Only George Willard showed life, sparks and insight  
But alas he left Winesburg - so turn out the light.

## **the "art" of fielding** by chad harbach

Methinks baseball's a blue collar game,  
And that in no way causes it shame.

It's spittin', dust kickin', and cussin' the calls,  
And fartin' and burpin', then pullin' your balls.

Long days on the road, long nites dating boredom,  
Drinkin' booze, chasin' skirts, and dreamin' of stardom

Now, along from Harvard comes this highfullutin' Harbach,  
His blood - quite blue, yet no blue on his back.

He waxes poetic that baseball's high art,  
Methink this visual's dead from the start...!

Indeed, his haute descriptions seem rather queer,  
Sorta like sewing a silk tie on a pig's ear...!

So Chad, please, let baseball stay blowsy and blue

With its warts, mud and farts ... yet American True !!

*K. Gilbert 10/7/2012*

## ***Wings & Wisdom***

*(inspired by On Top of Spoon Mountain by John Nichols [September 2013])*

In Callow Youth my fledgling wings  
Grew strong, knew no fatigue  
I flapped and fluttered, soared on high  
My only bounds ... earth and sky.  
And when o'er Mountains did I fly  
Alas, only big gray rocks caught my eye.  
So, I sped by ...

In Age I found these same mounts majestic -  
Enticing, vertiginous ... indeed, quite fantastic!  
But now my wizened body and weary wings  
Could no longer lift me up to these utopic things

So today I sit, gazing up, sipping fine red wines  
And though my corpus 'tis at Ground Zero  
My soul's in those tall, tall pines.

*K. Gilbert, 9/26/2013*

***The Dharma Bums*** by Jack Kerouac *(November 2017)*

## ***Ode to Japhy***

Buddha .... can this sinner be saved again?  
Said He ... Yes, yes! the Answer's Zen!

I plumbed the Princess, but didn't find  
Enlightenment to clear my mind  
So Buddha, says I, Take my Hand  
Tell me, So I understand

*"The Past is Prologue, the Future: Fog  
You must live in the Now  
To avoid that cog*



*"Life is like a glass of wine  
Quaff it deep to reach Zen Divine*

*"The first sip - anticipation, the second: Joy  
The third gives thanks; the fourth... Ecstasy! Oye, oye!"*

A sudden epiphany swept me high  
Buddha's clarion call clears mind's eye  
By God, Buddha said: "Chug, chug, chug!"  
I'm in the Present - now pass that jug!

KG, 30 November 2017

Haiku:

Buddha say: Pray, Pray, Pray!  
Dharma Bum ... "Zen, Zen" - and then,  
Buddha booms: AMEN !!

**Tuxedo Park** *by Jennet Connant* (June 2018)

## Ode to A. Loomis

A. Loomis seldom developed a seed  
But he knew how to plant ... and grow them indeed!  
Via Persistence, Panache ... and a whole lot of cash!

And if little weeds entered his patch  
His leadership skills were more than a match  
And if external friction entered pell mell  
Alfred knew who to call ... and bombard them with hell.

And ironically, though radar was his main drum and fife  
Alfred managed to stay under it ... most of his Life.

KG, 28 June 2018

## First Lines

*Some of our memorable books started with:*

You don't know about me without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; but that ain't no matter.

If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth.

This is the saddest story I have ever heard.

Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo.

Bluefeather pulled the envelopes out of the mailbox as if they were a handful of glowing lava.

Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed.

One summer afternoon Mrs. Oedipa Maas came home from a Tupperware party whose hostess had put perhaps too much kirsch in the fondue to find that she, Oedipa, had been named executor, or she supposed executrix, of the estate of one Pierce Inverarity, a California real estate mogul who had once lost two million dollars in his spare time but still had assets numerous and tangled enough to make the job of sorting it all out more than honorary.

Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting.

The boy with fair hair lowered himself down the last few feet of rock and began to pick his way toward the lagoon.

At dusk they pour from the sky.

How easy it was to disappear: A thousand trains a day entered or left Chicago.

Ove is fifty-nine.

I first met Dean not long after my wife and I split up. I had just gotten over a serious illness that I won't bother to talk about, except it had something to do with the miserably weary split-up and my feeling that everything was dead.

It was Wang Lung's marriage day.

Robert Cohn was once middleweight boxing champion of Princeton.

124 was spiteful.

Mother died today. Or maybe yesterday, I can't be sure.

Like most small children, I learned my home address so that if I got lost, I could tell a grown-up where to take me.

A green hunting cap squeezed the top of the fleshy balloon of a head. The green earflaps, full of large ears and uncut hair and the fine bristles that grew in the ears themselves, stuck out on either side like turn signals indicating two directions at once.

Every summer Lin Kong returned to Goose Village to divorce his wife, Shuyu.

All this happened, more or less.

It is our intention to preserve in these pages what scant biographical material we have been able to collect concerning Joseph Knecht, or Ludi Magister Josephus III, as he is called in the Archives of the Glass Bead Game.

He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish.

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains.

In the town, there were two mutes and they were always together.

The cold passed reluctantly from the earth, and the retiring fogs revealed an army stretched out on the hills, resting.

It seems increasingly likely that I really will undertake the expedition that has been preoccupying my imagination now for some days.

I am a spy, a sleeper, a spook, a man of two faces.

Before the Communists came to power in 1949, I was a sophomore at the Huangpu Military Academy, majoring in political education.

To the red country and part of the gray country of Oklahoma, the last rains came gently, and they did not cut the scarred earth.

Lolita. Light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul.

## Field Trips

Over these twenty-five years, the Book Club has conducted a handful of Field Trips. These were first proposed by our Leader and Founder, John Beresky, now of Sun City, Arizona (the ultimate field trip). As John discovered, there is an inherent danger in proposing a field trip – to begin with, half the membership will not participate once it becomes clear that this is a Club trip, not a Family trip.

We have captured a bit of photographic evidence along the way, displayed here.



One of our early forays into the Wilderness was to Keith's cabin in Pagosa Springs, Colo in October 1995. At left we see a young Blackledge, Gilbert, Genoni, and Founder Beresky. We hiked the San Juan, smoked cigars, fought off Brunhilde and told lies.

And we even discussed the book: *Mozart* by Marcia Davenport.

Mozart was born in Salzburg in 1756 – apparently he had a band of some kind, as [at right] Genoni displays one of his CDs to Beresky and Easterling. Rather than subscribe to the Köchel catalogue, the LTBC insisted on only playing his prime numbers. No limit!

Nestled up against the banks of the San Juan River, the cabin stands on the original main street of Pagosa Springs - before the great mud slide of 1910 changed the landscape and the commerce patterns. Beresky went out early to fish, and returned announcing that LTBC must re-read '*A River Runs Through It*.'





Secondly, Field Trips tend to place our reputation in jeopardy, e.g., we have been accosted by Brunhilde in the hot springs of Pagosa; waitresses have questioned our authenticity (“you’re a *what?*”); Genoni was stopped by Texas State Troopers on our way to Ransom Canyon; and, perhaps most audacious of all, when we were posing for a Club Portrait in the Local Library of Pagosa and asked by the librarian about our presence in the Children’s Section, Ganong blithely informed her that we were a traveling band of pedophiles. Not surprising, we haven’t been invited back to Pagosa Springs since.

We traveled to Winslow, AZ and La Posada (Keith by train, old-school), restored by our host Allan Affeldt and his artist wife Tina Mion. Trains for tourists. Plenty of the clickety-click of the railroad track to lull you to sleep at night in your room – be it the Howard Hughes Hideaway, The Clark Gable Sleeping Quarters, The Carole Lombard Room (Genoni has challenged the “last night” myth), The Anne Morrow Lindbergh Ugly Lamp Room! And, we stood on the corner ...

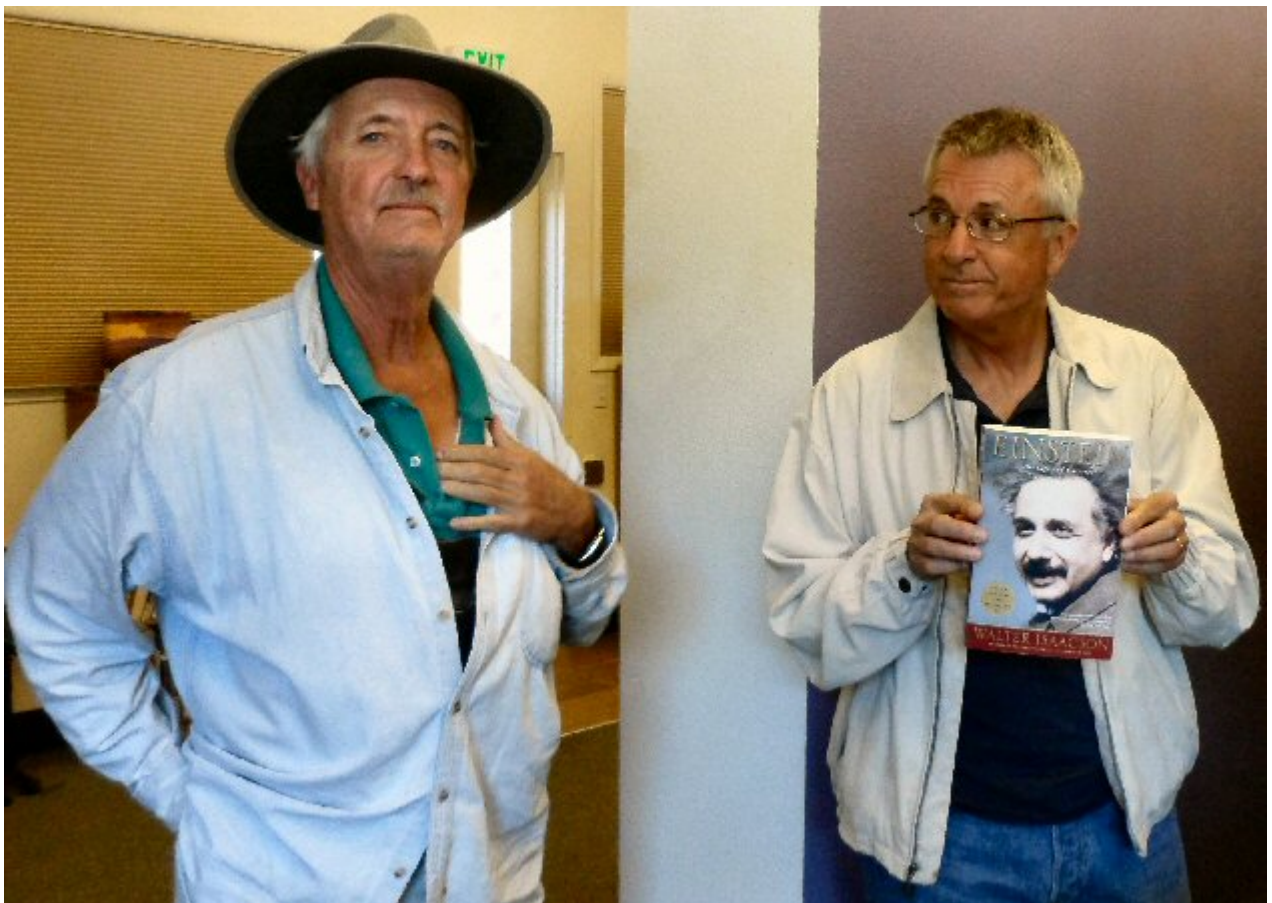


Then in October 2006 we returned to Pagosa incognito, to discuss Don Delillio’s *White Noise*. Our host was Keith, and he added an inspired poetic review. Above we see brave members Ed Duff, Mike Blackledge, Keith Gilbert, Jack Farrell, Tom Genoni, Rob Easterling, Charlie Palmer, and in front, kneeling in earnest supplication, none other than “The Pope” – Don Tubesing.

Our final full-fledged field trip during this past quarter century was to Jemez Springs, New Mexico to read – what else – *Jemez Springs* by Rudolfo Anaya. A disappointing book but a great trip. Photos follow on the next two pages, plus a group photo taken ... well, taken.



At Los Ojos Restaurant and Saloon, Jemez Springs, New Mexico, October 2006. Blackledge, Farrell, Palmer, Jensen, Genoni, Gilbert.



Perhaps the greatest gathering of physicists in New Mexico since the Manhattan Project ...





The traditional photo taken in the Children's Reading Section of the Library.

Back home again in Albuquerque. [left to right standing] Blackledge, Duff, Gilbert, Easterling, Palmer. [seated] Gillen, Genoni, Jensen, Ron Bousek.

*But we in it shall be  
remember'd;  
We few, we happy  
few, we band of  
brothers;  
For he to-day that  
shares his book with  
me  
Shall be my brother...*





# Ordered List of All Books Read

*by The Last Thursday Book Club*

Twenty-five years of monthly book club meetings should equate to 300 books. The world is not purely mathematical: our year actually begins in April; we were assigned one book twice (never again!); and we had to shut down a few meetings. But we came close, and 2018 will surpass that milestone. Over the years, we have voted at the end of the calendar year using an integer scale from 1 to 5 as to which are the best (a 5) and which are the worst (a 1). Here is the twenty-five year consensus result with meeting dates, author, plus some notes and quotes.

- 1 29-Jan-98 John Steinbeck **The Grapes of Wrath** (580 pgs) Our choice for best of all
- 2 29-Apr-93 Norman Maclean **A River Runs Through It**
- 3 25-Feb-99 Alfred Lansing **Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage**
- 4 29-Oct-98 Vladimir Nabokov **Lolita**
- 5 28-Feb-08 Ayaan Hirshi Ali **Infidel** Ali was the Somali-born member of the Dutch parliament who faced death threats after collaborating on a film about domestic violence against Muslim women.
- 6 25-May-00 Harper Lee **To Kill a Mockingbird** *"When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow...."*
- 7 27-Feb-94 Michael Sharra **The Killer Angels** (1974)
- 8 26-May-94 Pearl Buck **The Good Earth** (1937)
- 9 1/28/2016 Anthony Doerr **All The Light We Cannot See**  
*He says, "You are very brave."  
 She lowers the bucket. "What is your name?"  
 He tells her. She says, "When I lost my sight, Werner, people said I was brave. When my father left, people said I was brave. But it is not bravery; I have no choice. I wake up and live my life. Don't you do the same?"*
- 10 27-Jul-06 Ernest Hemingway **The Old Man and the Sea** *"Man is not made for defeat. A man can be destroyed but not defeated. Pull the boat, fish."*
- 11 28-Aug-94 Stephan Crane **Red Badge of Courage**
- 12 31-Jul-97 Stephen Ambrose **Undaunted Courage**
- 13 22-Aug-97 Cormac McCarthy **All the Pretty Horses**
- 14 30-Jul-98 Frederick Exley **A Fan's Notes**
- 15 27-Apr-00 Samuel L. Clemens **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**
- 16 28-May-09 Peter Godwin **When A Crocodile Eats The Sun** This story of a family was highly emotional. The author was watching his father die and his country die - what will it take (in time) to improve the situation in Zimbabwe? The father said whites in Africa are like Jews anywhere - waiting for the next crisis to erupt.
- 17 25-Apr-13 John Steinbeck **Cannery Row** *"The inhabitants are, as the man once said, 'whores, pimps, gamblers, and sons of bitches,' by which he meant everybody. Had the man looked through another peephole he might have said, 'saints and angels and martyrs and holy men,' and he would have meant the same thing."*
- 18 29-Oct-09 Truman Capote **In Cold Blood** *"It has been said of Mr. Clutter that his shoulders were broad, his hair had held its dark color, his square-jawed, confident face retained*

*a healthy-hued youthfulness, and his teeth, unstained, and strong enough to shatter walnuts, were still intact."*

- 19 28-Jul-94 Graham Greene **Monsignor Quixote**
- 20 28-Jan-99 Robert Penn Warren **All The King's Men**
- 21 27-May-99 Frank McCourt **Angela's Ashes** *"When I look back on my childhood I wonder how I survived at all. It was, of course, a miserable childhood: the happy childhood is hardly worth your while."*
- 22 25-Mar-04 Yann Martel **Life of Pi** a transformative novel, an astonishing work of imagination that will delight and stun readers in equal measure.
- 23 22-May-08 Per Petterson **Out Stealing Horses** The author as Trond Sander: *"All my life I have longed to be alone in a place like this."*
- 24 8/25/2016 Atul Gawande **Being Mortal** *"In the end, people don't view their life as merely the average of all its moments—which, after all, is mostly nothing much plus some sleep. For human beings, life is meaningful because it is a story. A story has a sense of a whole, and its arc is determined by the significant moments, the ones where something happens. Measurements of people's minute-by-minute levels of pleasure and pain miss this fundamental aspect of human existence. A seemingly happy life may be empty. A seemingly difficult life may be devoted to a great cause. We have purposes larger than ourselves."*
- 25 18-Nov-04 JM Coetzee **Disgrace** The least given to sentimentality of the talented novelists to have come out of South Africa.
- 26 5/3/2012 Leif Enger **Peace like a River** *"Real miracles bother people, like strange sudden pains unknown in medical literature. It's true: They rebut every rule all we good citizens take comfort in. Lazarus obeying orders and climbing up out of the grave - now there's a miracle, and you can bet it upset a lot of folks who were standing around at the time."*
- 27 25-Jul-96 F. Scott Fitzgerald **The Great Gatsby** *"In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since."*
- 28 31-Jan-13 Alan Paton **Cry, The Beloved Country** *"Cry, the beloved country, for the unborn child that is the inheritor of our fear."*
- 29 1/29/2015 Richard Llewellyn **How Green Was My Valley** *"There is beautiful you are."*  
*"No," said Marged, between a sigh and a sob.*  
*"Yes," said Owen.*  
*"No," said Marged, not so certain.*  
*"Behold," Owen said, from Solomon. "thou art fair. Thou hast dove's eyes."*  
*"Dove's eyes are small," Marged said.*  
*"Yours are so big they are my whole world," said Owen."*
- 30 9/29/2016 Truman Capote **Breakfast at Tiffany's** *"It calms me down right away, the quietness and the proud look of it; nothing very bad could happen to you there, not with those kind men in their nice suits, and that lovely smell of silver and alligator wallets. If I could find a real-life place that made me feel like Tiffany's, then I'd buy some furniture and give the cat a name."*
- 31 2/23/2017 Viet Thanh Nguyen **The Sympathizer** *"Some will undoubtedly find this episode obscene. Not !! Massacre is obscene. Torture is obscene. Three million dead is obscene. Masturbation, even with an admittedly nonconsensual squid? Not so much. I, for one, am a person who believes that the world would be a better place if the word "murder" made us mumble as much as the word "masturbation."*
- 32 19-Dec-96 John LeCarre **The Spy Who Came In From the Cold**
- 33 25-Mar-10 Greg Mortensen **Three Cups of Tea** One man's mission to promote peace, one school at a time. In 1996, Mortensen returned to Korphe to build the promised school.

- 34 25-Oct-12 Cormac McCarthy **No Country For Old Men** *"I think if you were Satan and you were settin around tryin to think up somethin that would just bring the human race to its knees what you would probably come up with is narcotics."*
- 35 30-Dec-93 Henry Mulisch **The Assault**
- 36 26-Jan-95 John Steinbeck **Winter of our Discontent**
- 37 29-Sep-05 Saul Bellow **The Actual** The worldly and clever Harry Trellman, a grand noticer of things, tells the familiar Bellow story of an old adolescent love which is finally admitted to and resumed.
- 38 14-Dec-10 Christopher Hitchens **Hitch-22** What do you most value in your friends? Their continued existence.
- 39 27-Jul-95 Walker Percy **The Moviegoer**
- 40 27-Mar-03 Patrick O'Brian **Master and Commander** The first in the splendid series of Jack Aubrey novels. Title provides links to Smithsonian articles on how this series came to be.
- 41 30-Jan-14 Kevin Powers **The Yellow Birds** *"There is a sharp distinction between what is remembered, what is told and what is true."*
- 42 31-Aug-95 John Kennedy Toole **A Confederacy of Dunces** the funniest book on the list; memorable characters
- 43 25-Jan-01 Simon Winchester **The Professor and the Madman** Creating the Oxford English Dictionary. One of the major contributors was a US Army surgeon who murdered a man in London and was in a lunatic asylum.
- 44 31-May-01 E. Annie Proulx **The Shipping News** From all outward appearances, Quoyale has gone through his first 36 years on earth as a big schlump of a loser.
- 45 22-Nov-01 Ivan Doig **This House of Sky: Landscapes of a Western Mind**  
The grandson of homesteaders and the son of a ranch hand and a ranch cook, Ivan Doig was born in Montana in 1939.
- 46 28-Apr-05 Marilynne Robinson **Housekeeping** *"I have observed that, in the way people are strange, they grow stranger,"* says Ruth, our narrator. When she was young, her mother returned with her and her sister to Fingerbone, Idaho. Once there, she left the two of them on the front porch of her mother's house, then committed suicide by driving her car into a nearby lake.
- 47 27-Mar-08 Max Frisch **Man in the Holocene** Erosion was a theme; Geiser's mind was eroding. At the same time, Geiser remembers every minute on the Matterhorn.
- 48 20-Nov-08 Michael Chabon **The Yiddish Policeman's Union** *"He has the memory of a convict, the balls of a fireman, and the eyesight of a housebreaker."* *"...collecting himself like a beggar chasing scattered dimes along the sidewalk."*
- 49 9/24/2015 Leo Tolstoy **The Death of Ivan Ilyich** *All his life the example of a syllogism he had studied in Kiesewetter's logic - "Caius is a man, men are mortal, therefore Caius is mortal" - had seemed to him to be true only in relation to Caius the man, man in general, and it was quite justified, but he wasn't Caius and he wasn't man in general, and he had always been something quite, quite special apart from all other beings; he was Vanya, with Mama, with Papa, with Mitya and Volodya, with his toys and the coachman, with Nyanya, then with Katenka, with all the joys, sorrows, passions of childhood, boyhood, youth.*
- 50 24-Jun-04 Bernhard Schlink **The Reader** The story of a man whose adolescent affair with an older woman returns to haunt him years later.
- 51 30-Dec-05 Joseph Conrad **The Nigger of the Narcissus** *"The Narcissus came gently into her berth; the shadows of soulless walls fell upon her, the dust of all the continents leaped upon her deck, and a swarm of strange men, clambering up her sides, took possession of her in the name of the sordid earth. She had ceased to live."*

- 52 29-Jun-06 Marilyn Robinson **Gilead** *"I have lived my life on the prairie and a line of oak trees can still astonish me."*
- 53 5/25/2017 J.D. Vance **Hillbilly Elegy** *"But yeah, like everyone else in our family, they could go from zero to murderous in a fucking heartbeat."*
- 54 27-Feb-14 Albert Camus **The Stranger** *"Mother died today. Or maybe yesterday; I can't be sure."*
- 55 25-Sep-14 Jack Schaefer **Shane** *"What a man knows isn't important. It's what he is that counts"*
- 56 6/25/2015 Jennet Conant **109 East Palace** *"For the first few weeks in Santa Fe, Oppenheimer and his key staff worked out of the office at 109 East Palace Avenue in the early mornings and made daily trips up to Los Alamos to inspect the progress of the construction. "The laboratories at the site were in a sketchy state, but that did not deter the workers," Dorothy wrote of those hectic early days. "In the morning buses, consisting of station wagons, sedans, or trucks, would leave 109 and pick up the men at the ranches and take them up the Hill. Occasionally, a driver would forget to stop at one or another of the ranches and the stranded and frustrated scientists would call in a white heat."*
- 57 30-Apr-09 David Quannem **The Reluctant Mr. Darwin** *"He didn't foresee being swallowed up by barnacle taxonomy for eight years ... His study must have smelled like a pub, from the evaporation of pickling alcohol off his specimens."* Darwin anecdotes: Little son George asking his playmates, "Where does your father do his barnacles?"
- 58 29-Jul-10 Raymond Chandler **The Big Sleep** *"I've been around," he said. "Know the boys and such. Used to do a little liquor-running down from Huenene Point. A tough racket, brother. Riding the scout car with a gun in your lap and a wad on your hip that would choke a coal chute. Plenty of times we paid off four sets of law before we hit Beverly Hills. A tough racket."*  
*"Terrible." I said*  
*He leaned back and blew smoke at the ceiling from the small tight corner of his small tight mouth.*  
*"Maybe you don't believe me," he said.*  
*"Maybe I don't." I said. "And maybe I do. And then again maybe I haven't bothered to make my mind up. ...."*
- 59 27-Sep-07 James Dickey **Deliverance** Dickey's writing is gripping - the rape scene actually hurt to read it. Some of his poetic descriptions were carried away. He provided unspoken interaction between the four guys, most of whom wanted to be macho like Lewis.
- 60 17-Dec-09 Charles Nordhoff **Mutiny on the Bounty** The story of the Bounty will be told as long as men sail the sea. The storytelling genius of the authors finds here a canvas filled with color, action and adventure. Readers will realize, as did the authors, that so large a drama could not be confined to the compass of an ordinary book. Nordoff and Hall chose to tell the story of the Bounty in three acts. We read the first.
- 61 28-Oct-93 Rudolpho Anaya **Bless Me Ultima**
- 62 22-Dec-94 Jerzy Kosinski **The Painted Bird**
- 63 23-Dec-99 Ernest Hemingway **The Sun Also Rises** Everyone enjoyed the bull fighting descriptions, wanted more.
- 64 27-Jul-00 Stephen Ambrose **Citizen Soldiers: Normandy to the Bulge** Combines history and journalism to describe how American GIs battled their way to the Rhineland.
- 65 26-Feb-04 John Lanchester **The Debt to Pleasure** If Humbert Humbert had written a cookbook rather than about his nymphet, this would have been the book.
- 66 25-May-06 William Faulkner **As I Lay Dying** It takes two people to make you, and one people to die. That's how the world is going to end.
- 67 28-Sep-06 Cormac McCarthy **Blood Meridian or The Evening Redness in the Sky** *War endures. ... Before man was, war waited for him. ... Men are born for games. Nothing else. ...*

*(every child) knows too that the worth or merit of a game is not inherent in the game itself but rather in the value of that which is put at hazard.*

- 68 25-Feb-10 Cormac McCarthy **The Road** In a novel set in an indefinite, futuristic, post-apocalyptic world, a father and his young son make their way through the ruins of a devastated American landscape, struggling to survive and preserve the last remnants of their own humanity.
- 69 28-Mar-13 Denis Johnson **Train Dreams** *"Living up the Moyea with plenty of small chores to distract him, he forgot he was a sad man. When the hymns began, he remembered." "But they hushed, all at once and quite abruptly, when he stood still at center stage, his arms straight out from his shoulders, and went rigid, and began to tremble with a massive inner dynamism. Nobody present had ever seen anyone stand so still and yet so strangely mobile. He laid his head back until his scalp contacted his spine, that far back, and opened his throat, and a sound rose in the auditorium like a wind coming from all four directions, low and terrifying, ..."*
- 70 19-Dec-13 William Faulkner **Light in August** *"Like a fellow running from or toward a gun ain't got time to worry whether the word for what he is doing is courage or cowardice."*
- 71 5/28/2015 Daniel James Brown **The Boys in the Boat** *"Standing there, watching them, it occurred to me that when Hitler watched Joe and the boys fight their way back from the rear of the field to sweep ahead of Italy and Germany seventy-five years ago, he saw, but did not recognize, heralds of his doom. He could not have known that one day hundreds of thousands of boys just like them, boys who shared their essential natures—decent and unassuming, not privileged or favored by anything in particular, just loyal, committed, and perseverant—would return to Germany dressed in olive drab, hunting him down."*
- 72 8/27/2015 William Shakespeare **King Lear** *"When we are born, we cry that we are come to this great stage of fools." "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods. They kill us for their sport."*
- 73 29-Mar-07 William Kennedy **Ironweed** Ironweed is only secondarily about Albany. It is primarily about survival - about an ordinary man, a bum by his own admission, whose extraordinarily bad luck has brought him to rock bottom but also to the discovery, within himself, of an inner strength that he cannot understand.
- 74 28-Oct-10 Larry McMurtry **The Last Picture Show** We enter the one-stoplight town of Thalia, Texas, where Duane Moore, his buddy Sonny, and his girlfriend Jacy are all stumbling along the rocky road to adulthood. The trip includes naked swimming parties, a visit to a blind heifer, mean high school coach, dancing with erections, the real Merc (1948-1951), and road trips to Mexico.
- 75 30-Jun-05 Khaled Hosseini **The Kite Runner** An epic tale of fathers and sons, of friendship and betrayal, that takes us from the final days of Afghanistan's monarchy to the atrocities of the present.
- 76 6/30/2016 Hampton Sides **Ghost Soldiers** *"When Lieutenant Sato was satisfied that all 150 prisoners were dead, he ordered his men to heave the stray bodies back into the smoky pits. The soldiers splattered additional gasoline inside and reignited the trenches. They tossed in more grenades as well as sticks of dynamite to make it appear as though the victims had perished in an air raid after all, with the shelters receiving 'direct hits' from American bombs. The immense pall of smoke curling from the three subterranean pyres was noted by observers five miles distant, across Puerto Princesa Bay."*
- 77 26-Aug-99 David Guterson **Snow Falling on Cedars**
- 78 30-Nov-00 George MacDonald Fraser **Flashman: From the Flashman Papers**
- 79 29-Jul-04 Walter Isaacson **Benjamin Franklin: An American Life** Transforms marble men into flesh-and-blood figures, complex and admirable if hardly perfect.
- 80 29-Sep-04 Dai Sijie **Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress** A lot of laughs as well as having our eyes opened again concerning Mao's Cultural Revolution
- 81 27-Jan-05 Seamus Heaney **Beowulf - the new verse translation** In the introduction to his translation, Seamus Heaney argues that Beowulf's role as a required text for

many English students obscured its mysteries and "mythic potency." We are treated to a world view in which a thane's allegiance to his lord and to God is absolute.

- 82 25-Aug-05 Toni Morrison **Beloved** Race, slavery, and the effects and banality of evil. Sethe, Paul D, and Stamp Paid have each endured a furious past, complete with the worst horrors imaginable.
- 83 24-Oct-13 Joseph Conrad **Youth: A Narrative** "oh youth! The strength of it, the faith of it, the imagination of it!"
- 84 7/27/2017 Stephen Bodio **Querencia** "In the bullring, the terrified bull always returns to same spot as if it is a place of safety. It is called the querencia. In writing, I had found my querencia. My place, my passion."
- 85 31-Aug-00 Kurt Vonnegut **Slaughterhouse Five or the Children's Crusade** Extra Credit: Timequake
- 86 12/15/2016 Kurt Vonnegut **God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater** "Hello, babies. Welcome to Earth. It's hot in the summer and cold in the winter. It's round and wet and crowded. At the outside, babies, you've got about a hundred years here. There's only one rule that I know of, babies—God damn it, you've got to be kind."
- 87 30-May-02 Willa Cather **My Antonia**
- 88 27-Feb-03 Tony Horwitz **Blue Latitudes** Boldly Going Where Capt. Cook Has Gone Before
- 89 3/26/2015 Walter L. Miller Jr. **A Canticle for Leibowitz** "We are the centuries... We have your eoliths and your mesoliths and your neoliths. We have your Babylons and your Pompeiis, your Caesars and your chromium-plated (vital-ingredient impregnated) artifacts. We have your bloody hatchets and your Hiroshimas. We march in spite of Hell, we do – Atrophy, Entropy, and Proteus vulgaris, telling bawdy jokes about a farm girl name of Eve and a traveling salesman called Lucifer. We bury your dead and their reputations. We bury you. We are the centuries. Be born then, gasp wind, screech at the surgeon's slap, seek manhood, taste a little godhood, feel pain, give birth, struggle a little while, succumb: (Dying, leave quietly by the rear exit, please.)"
- 90 26-Jul-07 Tim O'Brien **The Things They Carried** Story collection included *The Sweetheart of Song Tra Bong* (story of Mary Anne and the Greenies) and *On the Rainy River* (story of the old man Elroy and The Trip (almost) to Canada).
- 91 29-Sep-95 William Faulkner **The Reivers** more great humor
- 92 25-Jun-98 Cormac McCarthy **The Crossing** Extra credit: Blood Meridian
- 93 17-Dec-98 Cormac McCarthy **Cities of the Plain**
- 94 2-Aug-01 Cornelius Ryan **The Last Battle** Battle for Berlin: Ryan stressed realism and was meticulous in attention to detail and his extensive research notes.
- 95 30-Dec-04 T. E. Lawrence **The Seven Pillars of Wisdom** "All men dream: but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act out their dream with open eyes, to make it possible."
- 96 28-Dec-06 Edward Abbey **The Brave Cowboy** Taking place in the fictional town of "Duke City, New Mexico"
- 97 31-Mar-11 Eudora Welty **The Optimists Daughter** "The mystery in how little we know of other people is no greater than the mystery of how much, Laurel thought."
- 98 29-May-14 Laura Hillenbrand **Unbroken** "Louie found the raft offered an unlikely intellectual refuge. He had never recognized how noisy the civilized world was. Here, drifting in almost total silence, with no scents other than the singed odor of the raft, no flavors on his tongue, nothing moving but the slow procession of shark fins, every vista empty save water and sky, his time unvaried and unbroken, his mind was freed of an encumbrance that civilization had imposed on it."



- 99 7-Aug-08 Khaled Hosseini **A Thousand Splendid Suns** Plot more believable than *The Kite Runner*. A page-turner synopsis of Afghanistan with women as third class citizens. Mariam's hatred of Laila turn into Friendship.
- 100 18-Dec-08 Dave Eggers **What is the What** Valentino Achak Deng, the real-life hero of this engrossing epic, was a refugee from the Sudanese civil war - the bloodbath before the current Darfur bloodbath - of the 1980s and 90s. The fictionalized memoir by Salon.com's Dave Eggers.
- 101 30-May-13 Barbara Kingsolver **The Poisonwood Bible** *"We came from Bethlehem, Georgia bearing Betty Crocker cake mixes into the jungle." "He was getting that look he gets, oh boy, like Here comes Moses tromping down off of Mount Syanide with ten fresh ways to wreck your life."*
- 102 29-Aug-13 Harriet Beecher Stowe **Uncle Tom's Cabin** *"Of course, in a novel, people's hearts break, and they die, and that is the end of it; and in a story this is very convenient. But in real life we do not die when all that makes life bright dies to us. There is a most busy and important round of eating, drinking, dressing, walking, visiting, buying, selling, talking, reading, and all that makes up what is commonly called living, yet to be gone through..."*
- 103 27-May-93 Forrest Carter **The Education of Little Tree**
- 104 22-Nov-94 Rudolpho Anaya **Tortuga**
- 105 26-Jan-96 Vladimir Nabokov **Glory**
- 106 25-Jun-96 Mark Twain **Life on the Mississippi**
- 107 4-Oct-96 Edward Abbey **The Best of Edward Abbey [or Slumgullion Stew]**
- 108 24-Oct-96 Maxine Hong Kingston **The Warrior Woman**
- 109 26-Jun-97 Joseph Conrad **The Secret Agent**
- 110 22-Sep-97 Wallace Stegner **Recapitulation**
- 111 18-Dec-97 William Styron **Lie Down in Darkness**
- 112 26-Oct-00 Charles Frazier **Cold Mountain**
- 113 31-Mar-05 James Bradley **Flyboys** Over the remote Pacific island of Chichi Jima, nine American flyers - Navy and Marine pilots sent to bomb Japanese communications towers were shot down. Eight were captured by Japanese soldiers on Chichi Jima and held prisoner. Then they disappeared.
- 114 27-Oct-05 Doris Kearns Goodwin **No Ordinary Time** A compelling chronicle of a nation and its leaders during the period when modern America was created.
- 115 20-Nov-14 Hector Hugh Munro **Collected Short Stories of Saki** *"The censorious said she slept in a hammock and understood Yeats's poems, but her family denied both stories."*
- 116 9/28/2017 Chester Nez **Code Talker** *"We Navajos believe in witchcraft. Cut hair and fingernail clippings should be gathered and hidden or burned. Such things could be used to invoke bad medicine against their owner. People should not leave parts of themselves scattered around to be picked up by someone else. Even the smallest children knew that."*
- 117 25-Jan-07 Ian McEwan **Saturday** a novel set within a single day -- 15 February 2003. Henry Perowne is a contented man - a successful neurosurgeon.
- 118 27-Jan-00 Sebastian Junger **The Perfect Storm** an extended Reader's Digest true-adventure article, except the heroes don't survive
- 119 25-Apr-02 Dava Sobel **Longitude**
- 120 29-Aug-02 Chaim Potok **The Chosen**

- 121 26-Sep-02 Gore Vidal **Julian** Gore Vidal's fictional recreation of the Roman Empire teetering on the crux of Roman Empire teetering on the crux of Christianity and ruled by an emperor who was an inveterate dabbler in arcane hocus-pocus, a prig, a bigot, and a dazzling and brilliant leader.
- 122 23-Oct-03 Gabriel Garcia Marquez **Love in the Time of Cholera** unrequited passion so strong that it binds three people's lives together for more than fifty years.
- 123 29-Jan-04 Tracy Chevalier **Girl with A Pearl Earring** The novel isn't perfect, but provides a view into a fascinating period of history and a portrait of perhaps the world's greatest painter.
- 124 23-Feb-06 Phillip Roth **The Plot Against America** A "what-if" historical novel -- the isolationist, Nazi sympathizer, and anti-Semite Charles Lindbergh runs against Roosevelt in 1940 and wins.
- 125 3-Jan-08 John Updike **Terrorist** From the first chapter one hears the ticking of a bomb in the background. Ahmad was a U.S. citizen who didn't adopt to the outside world as his home country. Jack Levy defused him.
- 126 26-Mar-09 Jose Saramago **Blindness** Saramago's apocalyptic novel provides yet another view of man's animal nature. Chaos seems to inevitably bring out the worst in us. On the other hand, Saramago also portrayed some of the love and tenderness we associate with human behavior.
- 127 19-Nov-09 John Banville **The Untouchable** It was not about spying but about relationships. Protagonist was a wit in the true English tradition. The writing was at times very special - such as "a tracery of raindrops" and "Sodden sycamore leaves lolloping about the road like injured toads."
- 128 5/26/2011 Nathaniel Philbrick **In the Heart of the Sea** *"It was," he later remembered, "the most pleasing moment of my life" - the moment he stepped aboard the whaleship Essex for the first time. He was fourteen years old, with a broad nose and an open, eager face, and like every other Nantucket boy, he'd been*
- 129 10/27/2011 Candace Millard **The River of Doubt** *It quickly became clear that the inexperienced Father Zahm was not capable of organizing this new expedition, and a new guide was sought out. The Brazilian government provided Roosevelt with perhaps the most capable guide in all of South America, Colonel*
- 130 21-Nov-96 Jack Miles **God: A Biography** (won Pulitzer Prize in April, 1996)
- 131 28-Dec-00 Ralph Ellison **Invisible Man**
- 132 26-Apr-01 Wallace Stegner **Crossing to Safety** [be sure to see the review by the Literary Society of San Diego]
- 133 27-Jun-02 V. S. Naipaul **A Bend in the River** Naipaul was 2001's Nobel winner in literature.
- 134 29-Apr-04 Dashiell Hammett **The Maltese Falcon** The best known, and considered the best, of Hammett's Sam Spade novels.
- 135 26-Jun-08 William Golding **Lord of the Flies** Golding described theme as an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature and that the "shape of society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual and not on any political system..."
- 136 26-Jul-12 P. G. Wodehouse **Right Ho, Jeeves** *"The exquisite code of politeness of the Woosters prevented me clipping her one on the ear-hole, but I would have given a shilling to be able to do it. There seemed to me something deliberately fat-headed in the way she persisted in missing the gist."*
- 137 27-Jun-13 Kingsley Amis **Lucky Jim** *"If you can't annoy somebody, there is little point in writing." "... all his faces were designed to express rage or loathing. Now that something had happened which really deserved a face, he had none to celebrate it with. As a kind of token, he made his Sex Life in Ancient Rome face."*

- 13831-Jul-14 Paul Theroux **Last Train to Zona Verde** *"The murderous, self-elected, megalomaniacal head of state with the morals of a fruit fly is an obscene feature of African life that is not likely to disappear."*
- 1397/30/2015 J. D. Salinger **Catcher in the Rye** *"What really knocks me out is a book that, when you're all done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it. That doesn't happen much, though."*
- 14028-Jun-07 Mark Harris **Bang the Drum Slowly** *"It might or might not probably ever happen" - Good story, clever dialogue held true throughout the 243 pages (even the doctors talked like baseball players), minor league characters working toward teamwork.*
- 14127-Jan-11 Lisa Genova **Still Alice** *"Okay, Alice, can you spell the word water backwards for me?" he asked. She would have found this question trivial and even insulting six months ago, but today, it was a serious question to be tackled with serious effort. She felt only marginally worried*
- 14212/29/2011 Ha Jin **War Trash** *"Some of us rushed into the nearby bushes and some lay down in the roadside ditches. The planes dropped a few flash bombs, a shower of light illuminating the entire area; our troops and vehicles at once became visible. Then bombs rained down and machine guns began raking us".*
- 14328-Oct-04 Vladimir Nabokov **Invitation to a Beheading** Cincinnattus lives.
- 14426-Oct-06 Don DeLillo **White Noise** Captures the particular strangeness of life in a time where humankind has finally learned enough to kill itself. Naturally, it's a terribly funny book, and the prose is as beautiful as a sunset through a particulate-filled sky.
- 1456-Nov-08 James Welch **Winter in the Blood** *"...Long Knife had become shrewd in the way dumb men are shrewd. He had learned to give the illusion of work, even to the point of sweating as soon as he put his gloves on, while doing very little."*
- 14629-Apr-10 Irene Nemirovsky **Suite Francaise** Published more than sixty years following the author's death at Auschwitz, a remarkable story of life under the Nazi occupation includes two parts--"A Storm in June," set amid the chaotic 1940 exodus from Paris on the eve of the Nazi invasion, and "Dolce," set in a German-occupied provincial village rife with jealousy, resentment, resistance, and collaboration.
- 14720-Dec-12 Abraham Verghese **The Tennis Partner** *"perhaps he was drawn to doctoring because he subconsciously thought that if he attended to the pain of others, it would take care of his own."*
- 14811/19/2015 Bill Mauldin **Up Front** *"When you lose a friend [in battle] you have an overpowering desire to go back home and yell in everybody's ear, "This guy was killed fighting for you. Don't forget him--ever. Keep him in your mind when you wake up in the morning and when you go to bed at night. Don't think of him as the statistic which changes 38,788 casualties to 38,789. Think of him as a guy who wanted to live every bit as much as you do. Don't let him be just one of 'Our Brave Boys' from the old home town, to whom a marble monument is erected in the city park, and a civic-minded lady calls the newspaper ten years later and wants to know why that 'unsightly stone' isn't removed."*
- 14925-Mar-99 Nathanael West **The Day of the Locust** [movie c. 1975]
- 15030-Oct-99 Bill Bryson **A Walk in the Woods** Katz!
- 15119-Dec-02 Joseph Ellis **Founding Brothers** non-fiction
- 15225-Jun-03 Edgar Allan Poe **the works of Edgar Allan Poe** any poem, short story, work
- 15330-Jul-09 Sara Gruen **Water for Elephants** Gruen framed the story with Jacob as a 90 or 93 year old, and overpopulated it with characters (over 40 named). The nursing home scenes were entertaining, but the circus story itself was not so well written and not so credible. The

characters seemed to change character. E.g., Jacob the vet loves animals, but Jacob stands by while the elephant in his care is brutalized.

- 154 18-Nov-10 Ward Just **Exiles in the Garden** Alex had the usual habits of one who lived alone: a fixed diet, a weekly visit to the bookstore, a scrupulously balanced checkbook, and a devotion to major league baseball and the PGA Tour.
- 155 1/26/2012 Geraldine Brooks **Caleb's Crossing** *"Life is better than death. I know this. Tequamuck says it is the coward's talk. I say it is braver, sometimes, to bend."*
- 156 5-Jul-12 Carson McCullers **The Heart is a Lonely Hunter** *"This was her, Mick Kelly, walking in the daytime and by herself at night. In the hot sun and in the dark with all the plans and feelings. This music was her—the real plain her... This music did not take a long time or a short time. It did not have anything to do with time going by at all. She sat with her arms around her legs, biting her salty knee very hard."*
- 157 30-Mar-00 Leslie Marmon Silko **Ceremony**
- 158 28-Sep-00 Isabel Allende **Of Love and Shadows**
- 159 31-Jan-02 Rudyard Kipling **Kim**
- 160 20-Nov-03 Ian McEwan **Atonement**
- 161 3/30/2017 David Hays **My Old Man and the Sea** Some fathers and sons go fishing together. Some play ball. David Hays and Daniel Hays sailed 17,000 miles through the world's most feared and fabled waters in a little boat they built together. This is their story.
- 162 6/30/2011 Paul Harding **Tinkers** *"Your cold mornings are filled with the heartache about the fact that although we are not at ease in this world, it is all we have, that it is ours but that it is full of strife, so that all we can call our own is strife; but even that is better than nothing."*
- 163 3-May-07 Mark Haddon **The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time**  
Focuses on one character and gives the character more autistic traits than are normally seen in one individual.
- 164 28-Jan-10 Henning Mankell **Italian Shoes** *"I always feel more lonely when it's cold. The cold outside my window reminds me of the cold emanating from my own body. I'm being attacked from two directions. But I'm constantly resisting. That's why I cut a hole in the ice every morning. If anyone were to stand with a telescope on the ice in the frozen bay and saw what I was doing, he would think that I was crazy and was about to arrange my own death. A naked man in the freezing cold, with an axe in his hand, opening up a hole in the ice?"*
- 165 27-Oct-95 Marcia Davenport **Mozart** [extra credit: view *Amadeus*]
- 166 29-Feb-96 Willa Cather **Death Comes for the Archbishop** not at all the compelling book it's made out to be
- 167 29-Aug-96 Margaret Craven **I Heard the Owl Call My Name** *The Indian knows his village and feels for his village as no white man for his country, his town, or even for his own bit of land.*
- 168 27-Feb-97 Joseph Conrad **Heart of Darkness** (novella, 1902)
- 169 29-May-97 Mark Twain **Roughing It**
- 170 28-May-98 Ray Bradbury **Dandelion Wine**
- 171 19-Nov-98 John Hersey **Hiroshima**
- 172 24-Feb-00 James Joyce **Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man** extra credit: Dubliners
- 173 27-Sep-01 Philip Caputo **A Rumor of War** What the experience of Vietnam meant to a young college graduate, a 'gung-ho' lieutenant in the marine corps who enlisted for the 'heroic experience' of war.

- 17422-Dec-01 Stephen E. Ambrose **Band of Brothers** The saga of Easy Company, whose 147 members Ambrose calls the nonpareil combat paratroopers on earth circa 1941-45.
- 17529-May-03 James Lee Burke **In the Electric Mist with Confederate Dead** The restless specters wait in the shadows for cajun cop Dave Robicheaux
- 17618-Dec-03 Wallace Stegner **All the Little Live Things** many consider one of his three best.
- 17727-May-04 Simon Winchester **The Map That Changed the World** In the early years of the nineteenth century, William Smith created the first geological map of Great Britain, a time-consuming, solitary project.
- 17826-Aug-04 Azar Nafisi **Reading Lolita In Tehran** a memoir based on an underground book club in Tehran.
- 17924-Feb-05 María Rosa Menocal **The Ornament of the World** The history of medieval Spain under the Muslims, from the eighth through the fifteenth centuries. This was a rare period in history, when Christianity, Judaism, and Islam flourished side by side, borrowing language, art, and architecture from each other.
- 18031-Jan-08 Alice McDermott **Charming Billy** The grandmother "cooking the toughness into a roast." Her belief that vegetables and Brussels sprouts had no intrinsic taste but only received flavor from the salt and butter. The young lady awaiting word from her former suitor: *Tell him "I am still here."*
- 18125-Sep-08 William Steinbeck **To A God UnKnown** In this short novel, Steinbeck explores the relationship of man to his land. The plot follows a man, Joseph Wayne, who moves to California in order to establish a homestead, leaving his father, who soon dies.
- 18225-Jun-09 Junot Diaz **The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao** The life of Oscar Wao and the fukú. The curse served as a bridge across time and space. Diaz' ability to take depressing, brutal sequences under Trujillo and get us through them with a sparkling sense of humor. Example: "And you thought *your* committee was tough!"
- 18311/17/2011 Stacy Schiff **Cleopatra - A Life** Famous long before she was notorious, Cleopatra has gone down in history for all the wrong reasons. Schiff boldly separates fact from fiction to rescue the magnetic queen whose death ushered in a new world order.
- 1845/31/2012 Isabel Wilkerson **The Warmth of Other Suns** *"They traveled deep into far-flung regions of their own country and in some cases clear across the continent. Thus the Great Migration had more in common with the vast movements of refugees from famine, war, and genocide in other parts of the world, where oppressed people, whether fleeing twenty-first-century Darfur or nineteenth-century Ireland, go great distances, journey across rivers, deserts, and oceans or as far as it takes to reach safety with the hope that life will be better wherever they land."*
- 1854/30/2015 Phillip Roth **Nemesis** *"It was impossible to believe that Alan was lying in that pale, plain pine box merely from having caught a summertime disease. That box from which you cannot force your way out. That box in which a twelve-year-old was twelve years old forever. The rest of us live and grow older by the day, but he remains twelve. Millions of years go by, and he is still twelve."*
- 18612/17/2015 Nathaniel Philbrick **Mayflower** *"There are two possible responses to a world suddenly gripped by terror and contention. There is the Moseley way: get mad and get even. But as the course of King Philip's War proved, unbridled arrogance and fear only feed the flames of violence. Then there is the (Benjamin) Church way. Instead of killing him, try to bring him around to your way of thinking. First and foremost, treat him like a human being. For Church, success in war was about coercion rather than slaughter, and in this he anticipated the welcoming, transformative beast that eventually became, once the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were in place, the United States."*
- 18724-Feb-11 Arturo Pérez-Reverte **Queen of the South** *"There is one necessary skill...in this business. Looking at a man and instantly knowing two things. First, how much he's going to sell himself for. And second, when you're going to have to kill him."*

- 188 4/27/2017 Andrea Camilleri **The Shape of Water** *"In grammar school he'd had an old priest as his religion teacher. "Truth is light," the priest had said one day. Montalbano, never very studious, had been a mischievous pupil, always sitting in the last row. "So that must mean that if everyone in the family tells the truth, they save on the electric bill."*
- 189 10/26/2017 Ernest K. Gann **Song of the Sirens** *"We were not in any danger except the remote possibility of cannibalism if the calm continued. We persevered at the pumps mainly because it was something to do. Still, our doctor, who had been a stalwart at the pumps, now came down with the affliction known as the GIs. We nursed him with tender sarcasms about physicians healing themselves ..."*
- 190 26-Feb-95 Ernest Hemingway **Farewell to Arms**
- 191 6-Jun-96 Philip K. Dick **Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep**
- 192 28-Feb-02 Vladimir Nabokov **Bend Sinister**
- 193 21-Nov-02 Graham Greene **The Heart of the Matter**
- 194 1-Nov-07 George V. Higgins **The Friends of Eddie Coyle** When Higgins wrote this, his first novel, he was a federal prosecutor for the Boston district.
- 195 27-May-10 Robert Harris **Pompeii** A blend of fictional characters with the real-life eruption of Mount Vesuvius on August 24, 79 that overwhelmed Pompeii and its surrounding towns. The author references various aspects of vulcanology, use of the Roman calendar, and Roman aqueducts, which were built in all parts of the Roman Empire.
- 196 2/23/2012 Sherwood Anderson **Winesburg, Ohio** *In that high place in the darkness the two oddly sensitive human atoms held each other tightly and waited. In the mind of each was the same thought. "I have come to this lonely place and here is this other," was the substance of the thing felt."*
- 197 30-Aug-12 Evelyn Waugh **The Loved One** *"Mr. Schultz, you're jealous of Whispering Glades." "And why wouldn't I be seeing all that dough going on relations they've hated all their lives, while the pets who've loved them and stood by them , never asked no questions, never complained, rich or poor, sickness or health, get buried anyhow like animals?"*
- 198 25-Jul-13 Nadine Gordimer **July's People** *"you like to have some cup of tea? - July bent at the doorway and began that day for them as his kind has always done for their kind."*
- 199 26-Jun-14 John Banville **The Book of Evidence** *"Oh, by the way, the plot: it almost slipped my mind. Charlie French bought my mother's pictures cheap and sold them dear to Binkie Behrens, then bought them cheap from Binkie and sold them on to Max Molyneaux. Something like that. Does it matter? Dark deeds, dark deeds. Enough."*
- 200 2/26/2015 Adam Makos **A Higher Call** *"Von Faulhaber had authored "With Burning Concern" in 1937, and in 1941, von Galen had spoken out so vehemently against The Party and the Gestapo that the British had copied his sermons and dropped them from planes across Europe. German soldiers, civilians, and occupied peoples read them, including the future Pope John Paul II, who found a flyer in Krakow, Poland."*
- 201 4/28/2011 Jeannette Walls **Half Broke Horses** *"When people kill themselves, they think they're ending the pain, but all they're doing is passing it on to those they leave behind." "If I owned hell and west Texas, he said, I do believe I'd sell west Texas and live in hell."*
- 202 19-Feb-98 Oliver La Farge **Laughing Boy** (187 pgs)
- 203 23-Aug-01 H. G. Wells **The Time Machine** 1894 novel (his first) describes the adventures of his hero, the time-traveler, mostly in the year A.D. 802,701, when he encounters a class-ridden battle between the decadent Eloi and the primitive Morlocks.
- 204 24-Oct-02 Lance Armstrong **It's Not About The Bike**



- 20531-Aug-06 Erik Larson **The Devil in the White City** Their fates were linked by the magical Chicago World's Fair of 1893, nicknamed the "White City" for its majestic beauty. Architect Daniel Burnham built it; serial killer Dr. H. H. Holmes used it to lure victims to his World's Fair Hotel.
- 20630-Oct-14 W. Somerset Maugham **The Moon and Sixpence** *"I forget who it was that recommended men for their soul's good to do each day two things they disliked: it was a wise man, and it is a precept that I have followed scrupulously; for every day I have got up and I have gone to bed."*
- 20729-Nov-12 Dominic Green **Three Empires on the Nile** The book touches on the crumbling of the Ottoman Empire and the ascendancy of British imperialism, with a cast of characters that includes a parade of colonial notables including Gladstone, Gordon, Kitchener and the corrupt pseudo-monarchs of the disintegrating Egyptian vassal state.
- 20828-Aug-03 Tony Hillerman **seldom disappointed: a memoir**
- 20925-Sep-03 Stephen King **The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon** When a young girl finds herself lost in the woods, she tunes her Walkman to a Boston Red Sox game
- 21029-Jul-93 P. P. Church **The House at Otowi Bridge**
- 21126-Aug-93 Herman Hesse **Sidhartha**
- 21228-Aug-98 Jack Kerouac **On the Road**
- 21328-Jun-01 Mary Doria Russell **The Sparrow** Religion-based framework for First Contact with clever clashing of ideas, humor and pathos.
- 21430-Mar-06 Ken Ellington **Hard Line: Life and Death on the U.S.-Mexico Border** It's a timely issue, a local issue, a political issue, and a human issue of major proportions.
- 21528-Aug-08 Ann Patchett **Bel Canto** Fictionalizing the Peru kidnapping. *"Years later, when this period of internment was remembered by the people who were actually there, they saw it in two distinct periods: before the box and after the box."* (of opera scores was brought in).
- 2167-Dec-06 Thomas L. Friedman **The World is Flat** A Brief History of the 21st Century
- 21710/29/2015 Mitch Cullin **A Slight Trick of the Mind** *"Ultimately, Roger learned only of the encounter with the urban bees. The boy remained thoroughly fascinated by what he heard nonetheless, his blue-eyed stare never once straying from Holmes; his visage passive and accepting, his eyes wide, Roger's pupils stated fixed on those venerable, reflective eyes, as though the boy were seeing distant lights shimmering along an opaque horizon, a glimpse of something flickering and alive existing beyond his reach."*
- 21830-Mar-95 Anne Tyler **If Morning Ever Comes**
- 21928-Dec-95 Jane Smiley **A Thousand Acres** [extra credit: *King Lear* by W. Shakespeare] Iowa farmers really get down in the dirt. Jane should have left it to the bard.
- 22029-Mar-01 D. H. Lawrence **Sons and Lovers** There appears to be much autobiographical material in D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*.
- 22128-Jul-05 Christopher Buckley **Florence of Arabia** *"They handed her a pamphlet titled 'What American Women Should Understand When They Marry a Wasabi National.' The State Department's reflexive response to any American in extremis overseas is to hand them a pamphlet..."*
- 22229-Nov-07 Annie Proulx **That Old Ace in the Hole** Proulx presents the Texas Panhandle through the eyes of 25-year-old Bob Dollar, a newcomer arriving by car.
- 22324-Jun-99 Robert Boswell **The Life of Samuel Johnson** Most read the 430 page version, abridged from the 1799 edition. One of the most-frequently quoted men of the 18th Century. One should at least become familiar with it, but don't read every word.

- \* 224 4/28/2016 Allen Eskens **The Life We Bury** *"What if, in all the eons of eternity, this was the one and only time that I would be alive. How would I live my life if that were the case? Know what I mean? What if this was all there is?"*  
*"Well, I guess there'd be a lot of disappointed dead priests," I said.*  
*Carl chuckled. "Well, there's that," he said. "But it also means that this is our heaven. We are surrounded every day by the wonders of life, wonders beyond comprehension that we simply take for granted. I decided that day that I would live my life-not simply exist. If I died and discovered heaven on the other side, well, that'd be just fine and dandy. But if I didn't live my life as if I was already in heaven, and I died and found only nothingness, well...I would have wasted my life. I would have wasted my one chance in all of history to be alive."*
- 225 27-Apr-06 Joan Didion **The Year of Magical Thinking** Writer Joan Didion's best-selling memoir, "The Year of Magical Thinking" is about the death of her husband and her daughter's ultimately fatal illness.
- 226 28-Feb-13 Mordecai Richler **Barney's Version** *"I don't hold with shamans, witch doctors, or psychiatrists. Shakespeare, Tolstoy, or even Dickens, understood more about the human condition than ever occurred to any of you. You overrated bunch of charlatans deal with the grammar of human problems, and the writers I've mentioned with the essence."*
- 227 2/25/2016 Philip Caputo **The Longest Road** *"I really believe that when we start talking ourselves back, we'll have more to offer the world." he [Woodenknife] said. "I don't want a gray world."*  
*"You mean taking back our cultures and where we come from."*  
*"Absolutely! You want to talk about the fabric of this country, that's it."*  
*"So rather than a melting pot, it would be a..."*  
*"A blanket of color, all sewn in the shape of the U.S."*
- 228 6/29/2017 Hector Tobar **Deep Down Dark** *"We aren't the best men, but Lord, have pity on us," Henríquez begins. It's a simple statement, but it strikes several of the men hard."*
- 229 8/31/2017 Margot Lee Shetterly **Hidden Figures** *"That so many of them were African American, many of them my grandmother's age, struck me as simply a part of the natural order of things: growing up in Hampton, the face of science was brown like mine".*
- 230 17-Nov-05 Chinua Achebe **Things Fall Apart** First published in 1958, a relentlessly unsentimental rendering of Nigerian tribal life before and after the coming of colonialism.
- 231 26-Aug-14 Ian McEwan **Sweet Tooth** *"My needs were simple. I didn't bother much with themes or felicitous phrases and skipped fine descriptions of weather, landscapes and interiors. I wanted characters I could believe in and I wanted to be made curious about what was to happen to them."*
- 232 5/26/2016 Brian Kilmeade **Thomas Jefferson and the Tripoli Pirates** *"Dale hoped that the sight of the frigate, its hull lined with gun ports through which its dozens of guns could be seen, would inspire awe and deter the would-be pirates of all stripes from challenging unarmed American vessels."*
- 233 24-Jun-93 Tony Hillerman **Talking God**
- 234 30-Sep-93 V. B. Price **The City at the Edge of the World**
- 235 29-Mar-94 Mark Jaffe et al **Hard Choices: Health Care at What Cost?**
- 236 31-Mar-96 Sinclair Lewis **Kingsblood Royal**
- 237 30-Jan-97 Tony Hillerman **The Thief of Time**
- 238 22-Oct-97 Frank Conroy **MidAir** [short stories]
- 239 20-Nov-97 Barbara Kingsolver **The Bean Trees**
- 240 26-Mar-98 Aldous Huxley **Brave New World** (270 pgs)

- 241 29-Apr-99 Conrad Richter **The Sea of Grass** the triangle of rancher Colonel Jim Brewton, his unstable Eastern wife Lutie, and the ambitious Brice Chamberlain.
- 242 23-Sep-99 Henry Miller **Tropic of Cancer**
- 243 29-Jun-00 Mitch Albom **Tuesdays with Morrie - Life's Greatest Lesson**
- 244 25-Oct-01 J.K. Rowling **Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone** Harry Potter knows a miserable life with the Dursleys, his horrible aunt and uncle, and their abominable son, Dudley. Then an owl arrives.
- 245 31-Jul-03 Virginia Woolf **To The Lighthouse**
- 246 22-Feb-07 Norman Maclean **Young Men and Fire** Studying the Missouri River fire of 1949 was his passion for over two decades, and the book is still used as training material in firefighting schools.
- 247 29-Jan-09 Dave Guterson **The Other** Was John William truly "The Other" for Neil Countryman? Or a confused character who latched onto an enabler for his hare-brained schemes of wilderness and survival.
- 248 3/29/2012 Ford Madox Ford **The Good Soldier** *"There is no man who loves a woman that does not desire to come to her for the renewal of his courage, for the cutting asunder of his difficulties. And that will be the mainspring of his desire for her. We are all so afraid, we are all so alone, we all so need from the outside the assurance of our own worthiness to exist."*
- 249 27-Sep-12 Chad Harbach **The Art of Fielding** *"What would he say to her, if he was going to speak truly? He didn't know. Talking was like throwing a baseball. You couldn't plan it out beforehand. You just had to let go and see what happened."*
- 250 24-Apr-14 Richard Ford **The Sportswriter** Ralph Bascombe, the brooding antihero here, is not a Walter Matthau-style, cigar-smoking sportswriter. Rather he resembles John Updike's Rabbit Angstrom (sans cynicism). Bascombe has decided in his "mid-life crisis" years to write heartwarming articles for a glossy sports magazine, and in the literal world of sportswriting, he has found a way to avoid life's "searing regret" without sacrificing its mysteries.
- 251 12/18/2014 Saul Bellow **Humboldt's Gift** *"The physical body is an agent of the spirit and its mirror. It is an engine and a reflection of the spirit. It is the spirit's ingenious memorandum to itself and the spirit sees itself in my body, just as I see my own face in a looking glass. My nerves reflect this. The earth is literally a mirror of thoughts. Objects themselves are embodied thoughts. Death is the dark backing that a mirror needs if we are to see anything."*
- 252 3/24/2016 George Macdonald Fraser **Flashman and the Tiger** *"The advantage to being a wicked bastard is that everyone pesters the Lord on your behalf; if volume of prayers from my saintly enemies means anything, I'll be saved when the Archbishop of Canterbury is damned. It's a comforting thought."*  
*"I've been a Danish prince, a Texas slave-dealer, an Arab sheik, a Cheyenne Dog Soldier, and a Yankee navy lieutenant in my time, among other things, and none of 'em was as hard to sustain as my lifetime's impersonation of a British officer and gentleman."*
- 253 31-May-07 Douglas Waller **A Question of Loyalty** Plunges into the seven-week Washington trial of Gen. William "Billy" Mitchell, the hero of the U.S. Army Air Service during World War I and the man who proved in 1921 that planes could sink a battleship.
- 254 9/24/2009 Robert Heinlein **The Moon is a Harsh Mistress** Heinlein celebrating our 200th anniversary of our own revolution by having us witness it again, but this time the colony was perhaps more like Australia: a penal colony that constituted the basis of the population of the moon in 2076.
- 255 1/26/2017 Harper Lee **Go Set A Watchman** *"I need a watchman to tell me this is what a man says but this is what he means, to draw a line down the middle and say here is this justice and there is that justice and make me understand the difference."*
- 256 27-Mar-14 Thomas Pynchon **The Crying of Lot 49** *"One summer afternoon Mrs Oedipa Maas came home from a Tupperware party whose hostess had put perhaps too much kirsch*

*in the fondue to find that she, Oedipa, had been named executor, or she supposed executrix, of the estate of one Pierce Inverarity, a California real estate mogul who had once lost two million dollars in his spare time but still had assets numerous and tangled enough to make the job of sorting it all out more than honorary."*

- 257 11/30/2017 Jack Kerouac **The Dharma Bums** *"I felt like lying down by the side of the trail and remembering it all. The woods do that to you, they always look familiar, long lost, like the face of a long-dead relative, like an old dream, like a piece of forgotten song drifting across the water, most of all like golden eternities of past childhood or past manhood and all the living and the dying and the heartbreak that went on a million years ago and the clouds as they pass overhead seem to testify (by their own lonesome familiarity) to this feeling."*
- 258 22-Feb-01 Michael Crichton **Timeline** His *Andromeda Strain* was very well done, and so was *Jurassic Park*. Not *Timeline*.
- 259 30-Jan-03 Walter Mosley **A Little Yellow Dog** an Easy Rawlins Mystery
- 260 27-Oct-94 Deborah Tannen **You Just Don't Understand**
- 261 1-May-08 Sarah Dunant **The Birth of Venus** Historical view of Florence. The Strange Case of the Tattooed Nun.
- 262 24-Jun-10 Herta Müller **The Land of Green Plums** *The Land of Green Plums* is the story of a group of young people in Nicolae Ceausescu's Romania.
- 263 26-Aug-10 Marcus Luttrell et al **The Lone Survivor** *The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing: Push 'em out. Gentlemen, I'm your instructor for the next two weeks. I'll help you, if you need help, over matters of personal concerns. If you get injured, go to medical and get it fixed and get back into training. I'm your instructor. Not your mother. I'm here to teach you. You stay in the track, I'll help you. You get outside the track, I'll hammer you. Understood? Get wet and get sandy.*
- 264 11/17/2016 Milo Quaife **Kit Carson's Autobiography** "The foregoing I hereby transfer to Mr. Jesse B. Turly to be used as he may deem proper for our joint benefit."
- 265 4-Feb-94 P. D. James **The Children of Men**
- 266 28-Apr-94 Alan Lightman **Einstein's Dreams** (fiction)
- 267 26-Jan-06 Barbara Tuchman **The March of Folly** From Troy to Vietnam. *"no experience of the failure of his policy could shake his belief in its essential excellence."*
- 268 26-May-05 Donna Leon **Acqua Alta** Complex, moral, gracious, and fiercely loyal, Commissario Guido Brunetti is a husband, father, detective, and, above all, a proud resident of the enchanted floating city of Venice.
- 269 4-May-95 William Kittredge **Hole in the Sky - A Memoir** a life examined that shouldn't have been
- 270 2-Apr-02 George Bernard Shaw **Man and Superman**
- 271 9/23/2011 N. Scott Momaday **The Ancient Child** *"Set imagined it was to please, but it was to astonish God that he painted. His presumption and arrogance were pronounced and dangerous, for they would certainly lead to the Sin of Despair, thence to death and nothingness. Bent said so, half in jest, on*
- 272 7/28/2011 Mario Vargas Llosa **The Storyteller** *"But what do I have? The things I'm told and the things I tell, that's all. And as far as I know, that never yet made anyone fly."*
- 273 21-Nov-13 J. Michael Orenduff **The Pot Thief Who Studied Escoffier** *"If I stuck to my principles, the nightmare at Schnitzel never would have happened. Maybe there was a lesson there. I called Dolly and invited her for dinner. The sale of a second plate shortly before closing buoyed my spirits. If I eventually sold all one hundred, I'd gross ten thousand dollars."*
- 274 29-Sep-94 Oliver Lange **The Devil at Home**

- 275 23-Apr-98 John Updike **Rabbit is Rich** extra credit: *Rabbit Run* and *Rabbit Redux*
- 276 23-Sep-98 Larry McMurtry **Buffalo Girls** (350 pgs; one of his worst)
- 277 24-Apr-03 James Joyce **Ulysses** the major imaginative work in English prose of the 20th century.
- 278 27-Aug-09 Daniel Silva **The Kill Artist** Story of international intrigue and the global fight against terrorism with focus on Israeli intelligence efforts. Some intriguing questions about morality, particularly on the part of Ari Shamron who allowed the killing of a terrorist who was dying of a brain tumor.
- 279 26-Sep-13 John Nichols **On Top Of Spoon Mountain** "Come that future day Ben would kneel beside my half-exposed skull on which bleached tufts of ancient pelage were fluttering while Miranda rustled through the weathered knapsack: "Hey Ben, look! Here's one of those antique cameras with a snapshot inside of our reasonable, responsible, and respected dad on his 65th birthday when he perished of heatstroke, a heart attack, and lethal naïveté combined."
- 280 22-Jun-95 Herman Hesse **Magister Ludi: The Glass Bead Game** intellectual life vs. real life: choose one
- 281 7/28/2016 Walker Percy **The Thanatos Syndrome**  
*"The breakfast was delicious. Where does the water come from?"*  
*Elmo Jenkins laughs. "Don't worry about it, Doc. You not drinking river water. That's Abita Springs water, right from our back yard, the best in the world, as you know."*  
*"I know. What do the prisoners on the farm drink?"*  
*"That's river water, treated so it's safe, but I can taste the chemicals."*  
*"You mean from the Ratliff intake?"*  
*"Right, Doc. Seems like you know this country around here."*  
*"A little."*  
*"Enjoy your walk, Doc."*
- 282 10/27/2016 Edwin Lefevre **Reminiscences of a Stock Operator** "I was looking over the quotation board, noticing the changes - they were mainly advances - until I came to Union Pacific. I got a feeling that I ought to sell it. I can't tell you more. I just felt like selling it."
- 283 22-Apr-97 Ivan Doig **Ride With Me Mariah Montana**
- 284 30-Aug-07 Franz Kafka **The Castle** the new translation by the Kafka scholar, Mark Harman, who, according to the The New York Times, has "made it more faithful to Kafka's dreamlike style."
- 285 25-May-95 John Updike **The Witches of Eastwick**
- 286 18-Jul-02 Laura Esquivel **Swift as Desire** Laura Esquivel is the award-winning and bestselling author of *Like Water for Chocolate*.
- 287 22-Nov-93 Richard Bach **One**
- 288 25-Apr-96 Max Evans **Bluefeather Fellini in the Sacred Realm** My eternal source of shame, but not as bad as my brothers claim
- 289 27-Mar-97 Gabriel Garcia-Marquez **One Hundred Years of Solitude**
- 290 25-Jul-99 Richard Bach **Jonathan Livingstone Seagull**
- 291 30-Sep-10 Rudolpho Anaya **Jemez Spring** With "Jemez Spring," Rudolpho Anaya again centers on the literate and spiritual private investigator, Sonny Baca. We have a corpse. But not just any dead body. Sonny is beckoned to crack the mystery behind the death of New Mexico's governor whose bloated, half-cooked body is found in the Bath House at Jemez Springs.
- 292 30-Jun-94 Rudolpho Anaya **Albuquerque**

293 26-Feb-09 Don Tubesing **Just Coffee** Don Tubesing has already received the highest award from the LTBC - **no grading** was requested or necessary, no greater accolade is possible. May he rest in Wisconsin.

*Don Tubesing responds to his book's special placement on our list:*

Gentlemen, Thanks for sending me a copy of the historical book ranking list. Clearly there are several books I missed that I will now read, AND several I missed that I will not -- but it's so good to be reminded that you are still slicing and dicing titles one after the other.

It's now 8 years since I moved from ABQ to Madison. No, I have not found any book club that matches LTBC -- a treasured experience during my years with you. I miss it and you.

Now to the part where I celebrate recognitions.

1. The first, you might remember is an award you presented at my last meeting of the last Thursday, it reads *The Last Thursday Book Club, Little or No Achievement Award, presented this last Thursday of February 2009 to Donald A Tubesing, aka "The Pope" in recognition of His outstanding devotion to time away from meetings while occasionally bringing us his insights as to the trials and tribulations of the independent book publisher.* (I have attached a photo of it currently hanging on my office wall alongside the photo of me from three years ago throwing out the first pitch at a Brewers game -- behind my back, and a strike to boot. I'll never throw another, since it could only lower my average!) You can see that the award you all presented to me hangs in a place of great honor.
2. Now to the second, and most recent, honor have received from you. I notice by looking at the list of books that *Just Coffee*, by Don Tubesing is listed at #293 of 293. I weep with joy to be bookended, top and bottom, with Mr J Steinbeck and *Grapes of Wrath*. Presuming that my luck holds out, next month my book should rise to #294 on the list. By the end of the year, this little-known masterpiece could be well above the 300 mark-- and that is something to be proud of for sure!

I shall copy my kids with this note to be certain that they include the honor in my obituary.

3. I now wish to boldly apply for another award:

*"The Over 25 Years, Most Stupid Idea Any Host Ever Tried Award."* Those of you who were there will remember when I hosted our reading of, "Young Men and Fire" I decided to serve burned popcorn to add a bit of atmosphere, but left it in too long and set the whole microwave on fire, filling the house with putrid smoke just as you all arrived -- a perfectly classy move!

I hope that you are each thriving as you age. AND CONGRATULATIONS ON YEAR # 25 for LTBC!  
Good memories are always uplifting and my memories of our meetings remain to me a treasure.

Blessings to you all,  
- Don

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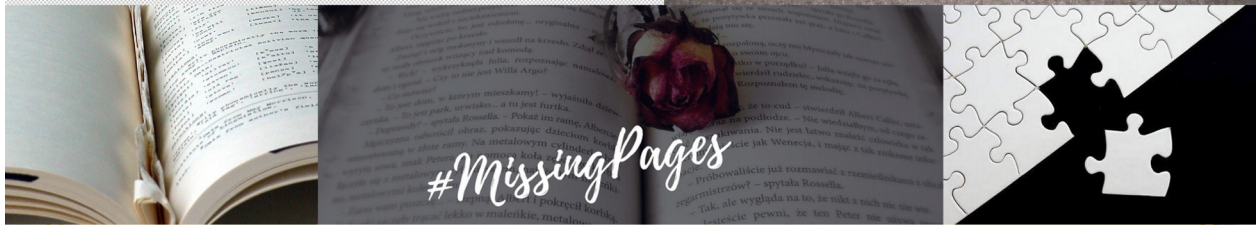
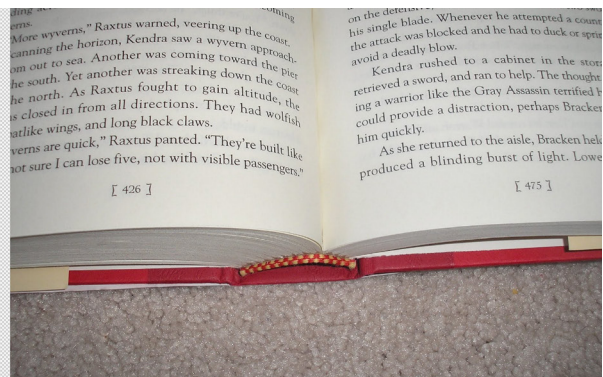
*Book selections during this silver anniversary year of publication will get us to 300 books and beyond:*

28-Dec-2017	Ron Chernow	<b>Alexander Hamilton</b>
25-Jan-2018	Fredrik Backman	<b>A Man Called Ove</b>
22-Feb-2018	Lawrence Goldston	<b>Deadly Cure</b>
29-Mar-2018	Adam Johnson	<b>The Orphan Master's Son</b>
26-Apr-2018	Kent Haruf	<b>Plainsong</b>
31-May-2018	Kazuo Ishiguro	<b>The Remains of the Day</b>
28-June-2018	Jennet Conant	<b>Tuxedo Park</b>
26-July-2018	Max Evans	<b>The Hi-Lo Country</b>

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# MISSING PAGES



## MEMORIAL PRAYERS/POEMS



When Christopher Hitchens was asked what he valued most in his friends, he responded:

“Their existence.”

# Edgar Ben Smith

(1932 – 2005)

## Ode to Ben Smith

To our beloved Book Club buddy, Ben  
Alas, we say with angst...Amen.  
This man of letters, good ken and books,  
Sterling successes abound in many nooks.

Ben's words, soft and crisp, spoken with sardonic smile,  
Gave insights which radiated a "Texas mile."

Ben savored hats, bolos, and sumptuous cigars by the box,  
And he'd carved a warm niche for his bodacious Red Sox.

Now that Ben has finished his "Book of Life,"  
May we tender thought bouquets to Elaine, his wife.

Hark, I hear dapper Ben rapping gently on that Pearly Gate,  
St. Peter surely will not make Ben wait!

"You were a magnificent maestro, Dr. Ben,  
Good life, friends, books - you're a Perfect Ten ! "

"And guess what, Ben, our spring training starts today,  
You'll be team physician and scout ... Play ball I say ! "

*K. Gilbert*

"... I shall ever regard as the best and wisest man whom I have ever known."

- *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Final Problem"*

Adios, Amigo



**Edgar Benton Smith, MD**, was born on 2 June 1932 in Houston, TX, the son of Dr. & Mrs. Burt B. Smith. He attended Rice University and graduated from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. He completed his residency in Dermatology at Brook Army Hospital in San Antonio, Texas, and began his academic career on the faculty of the University of Miami Dermatology Department. Shortly thereafter, he moved to Albuquerque to start up a Division of Dermatology at the University Of New Mexico School of Medicine.

He was a gregarious member of the Baker Street Irregulars, the major literary society devoted to the Great Detective, as well as a founder of several scion groups. Best-known was the Sir James Saunders Society, "Dermatologists Devoted to Detection," a come-one-come-all group that convened for lunch during the annual American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) meeting. (It was named for a dermatologist consulted by Sherlock Holmes in "The Blanched Soldier.")

Ben was a distinguished academic dermatologist who served as president of the AAD and in 2003 received its highest award, the Gold Medal. He was a devoted husband to Elaine, his wife of 51 years, and a loving father to his two daughters and their families.

His interests were eclectic: in addition to dermatology and Sherlock, he was an expert on world travel, religious history, subways, "bargain" hotels, bolo ties, cigars, Tarzan, the Boston Red Sox, early 20th century American pottery, pipes, pulp fiction, and coronation china (which he collected "for Elaine"). He loved UNM and remained active in the department as long as he was able.

Ben's warmth, humor, and enthusiasm for life is remembered fondly by his friends all over the world.

Dr. Smith was the Director of the Division of Dermatology when it was in the Department of Internal Medicine and was instrumental in creating both a Department and the residency program. He moved to University of Texas, Galveston, as the chairman of Dermatology at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, TX where he served for 21 years. When he retired in 2000, he returned as faculty to the UNM Department of Dermatology. Ben received many honors in his field, including President of the American Academy of Dermatology.

Ben was a stellar teacher and as a part of his commitment to the education of dermatology, he created an endowment within the department to help support and encourage resident to present at local, regional, national and international conferences. His impact continues long after his death on May 12, 2005.

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# Don Benoist

(1939 – 2005)

Don, our long-time Book Club brother,  
was the consummate gentle-man.

Generally our raucous sessions initially displayed  
Don's non-verbal communication skills -  
featuring his pixie chortles and guffaws!

In reviewing a book, Don always prefaced -  
" I just don't know, but..."  
And what followed was a measured, incisive analysis  
which offered immeasurable insights!

Alas, Don closed his book of life Last Thursday  
... but he bequeathed to us bibliophile buddies  
a marvelous menagerie of radiant memories.

We will not soon forget you, Gentle-Don...

*K. Gilbert, August 2005*

*from the Albuquerque Journal, Saturday 20 Oct 2012:*

**Donald Leroy Benoist**, age 77, a resident of Albuquerque, died Thursday, August 18, 2005. He was a loving husband, father, and grandfather. He is survived by his wife, Helen; five children: David Benoist and wife, Linda, Jill Lundstrom and husband, Dick, Ann Benson, Kathleen Benoist, and Jeff Benoist and wife, Michelle; eight grandchildren: Forrest, Blake, Erica, Carl, Molly, Caty, Josh, and Brandon. Don grew up in Mt. Vernon, IL and graduated with an engineering degree from the University of Illinois at Champagne. Don moved to Albuquerque in 1956 and worked for 34 years at Sandia National Laboratories before retiring in 1994.

Don was an active member of Central United Methodist Church in Albuquerque and greatly enjoyed spending time with fellow members of his Sunday school class. In his retirement, Don was involved in volunteer work at the Albuquerque BioPark, participated in "The Last Thursday" men's book club, and followed Lobo football and basketball games.

Don loved and was loved by his family and friends, and he will be greatly missed. A Memorial Service celebrating his life will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, August 22, 2005 at Central United Methodist Church, 1615 Copper Ave. NE. The family requests, in lieu of flowers, that memorial contributions may be made to Central United Methodist Church, 1615 Copper Ave NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106, or the Greater Albuquerque Habitat for Humanity, 204 San Mateo SE Ste. E, Albuquerque, NM 87108.

*French Mortuary 1111 University Blvd. NE 843.6333*

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# Thoughts of Joel Nash

(1939 – 2012)

You brought great wisdom to our clan  
And spread enlightenment on every man.

So, Joel, Why, Why, Why?  
We had no time to say goodbye ...

Quick of wit, suave of speech,  
On most any subject you could teach.  
You waxed poetic on feathers of a loon,  
Yet you, yourself, flew away too soon.

Joel, Why, pray tell, Why ...  
We had no time to say goodbye ...

Oh, you had a facile mind, from A to Z,  
Focusing on Big and Small, with insightful levity.

So, Joel, Why, Why, Why?  
We had no time to say goodbye ...

Your quips are legion ... humor on high,  
Followed by that signature twinkle of your eye.

Your made us laugh ... yet now we cry.  
So, Joel, Why, Why, Why?  
We had no time to say goodbye ...

We all must tackle stress and strife,  
Some bounce up ... some abandon Life.  
Joel, we respect your choice ... but Why, please Why?  
We had no time to say goodbye ...

So, Brother Joel, we've been truly blessed,  
By your bodacious brilliance ... and now you rest.  
But rest assured, your Chair of Honor's here,  
So quaff your brew, let's spread some cheer!

*K. Gilbert, 10/25/2012*

*from the Albuquerque Journal, 20 Oct 2012:*



**NASH, JOEL DAVID**, MD passed away unexpectedly on October 10, 2012 at his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He was born on August 8, 1939 in Rochester, Minnesota. His parents were Leo A. Nash, MD, and Helen Marie Arnquist Nash. He grew up in Fargo, North Dakota and St. Paul, Minnesota. Joel attended the St. Paul Academy, Harvard College (at age 16), and the University of Minnesota where he received BA, BS, and MD degrees. He interned at the University of New Mexico

Medical School. He served two years in the U.S. Army at McAfee Army Hospital on White Sands Missile Range as a General Medical Officer and as Chief of Professional Services. He was awarded the Army Commendation Medal.

Following active duty, Joel returned to the University of Minnesota for dermatology training and served in the SS01 U.S. Army Reserve Hospital. On completion of his education, he returned to Albuquerque and joined the Lovelace Clinic Staff, retiring in 2001 after 31 years. He had also been on the clinical faculty of the UNM Dermatology Department since its founding in 1973 and retained a keen interest in education. He is survived by his wife, Lori Nash; and two daughters, Leslie Nash Kilstofte (Mark Kilstofte) of Greenville, South Carolina, and Andrea Nash (Michelle King) of Albuquerque, New Mexico. He is also survived by three sisters, Jill Nash of Buffalo, New York, Sally Nash Meyfarth (Philip Meyfarth) of Macedonia, Ohio, and Wendy Nash Keller of Albuquerque, New Mexico; as well as nephew Ethan Mitchell of New York City, New York, nephew Michael Keller of Albuquerque, New Mexico; and niece Abby Keller, also of Albuquerque, New Mexico

Joel was beloved by his patients, family and friends. His contribution to the practice of dermatology was immeasurable; his love of cars, especially Corvairs, was a lifelong passion; his black "This is Not an Abandoned Car" GMC was known throughout the region; and his knowledge and ability to have an in-depth dialogue on almost every subject simply amazed everyone he met. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Joel's name may be made to the UNM Department of Dermatology, Attn: Dr. Steve Padilla, 1021 Medical Arts Ave., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131-5231 or to the charity of your choice.

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# In Memoriam, Richard W. Arms

(1935 – 2018)

## *Sleep Well, Sir Richard*

A man of Letters, Sir Richard Arms  
Also Market Technician with Wizardly Charms

Dick penned five books, and loved to fish  
His opus "Tackle Box" fulfilled that wish.

Like "Old Ike," a monster trout  
With whom Dick's bud Jim, had a lifetime bout

Yea, many times Jim had hooked his prey,  
Only to have "Old Ike" get away.

Then one bright morn Dick snags this beast,  
And his first thought: "Man, what a feast!"

But as Dick reels "Ike" to the shore  
He casts a reflection on his good friend's lore -

And then Dick, acting on wisdom and whim  
Does a "catch and release" in honor of Jim.

To our Book Club Dick sprinkled wisdom and insight  
And his droll sense of humor added radiant light.

In summary, Dick's impact no one can replace,  
He blended charm and wit with a golden grace!

So goodbye, Brother Dick, you've brought us much pleasure  
And sleep well, Richard, our consummate treasure.

*Keith Gilbert, LTBC Poet Laureate*



**Richard W. Arms, Jr.   *"I have had a Good Life"***

Dick Arms, 83, passed away in Albuquerque, NM, on Saturday, March 10, 2018 after heart surgery. Dick was preceded in death by his wife of 52 years, June Arter Arms. They were longtime residents of Albuquerque, relocating from Massachusetts in the 1950's.

Many of you will recognize Dick by the name of his famous stock market indicator, The Arms Index. It crosses the tape as ARMS and was originally known as TRIN. It is a volume adjusted advance/decline indicator that Dick created and originally wrote about for an article in Barron's in 1968. From there, his work in Technical Analysis continued to focus on volume aspects of the study. Dick's Equivolume Charting Method cleverly combined the volume data directly with the posting of the high, low, and close price statistics. Dick

wrote five books on Technical Market Analysis, focusing always on volume of shares traded, not just the price.

Beyond Dick's lifetime fascination with markets, was his love of literature and poetry. Dick had an immensely invigorating mind, and his passions were reading, writing and storytelling. He had the perfect joke for every occasion and was the life of every party he attended. He published many fiction books, including a book of short stories called *The Tackle Box* about his favorite hobby, fishing. As an avid fisherman, he traveled to many places to get the "Big" ones; Mexico, Alaska, Bermuda, and Cape Cod, to name a few. He took great joy in passing on the love of the sport to his son and grandson.

Dick loved the Southwest and found inspiration for several of his fiction books from his surroundings. His adventurous nature probably started during as youth spent growing up in Cuba, Colombia and Paraguay on sugar cane plantations, where he learned to speak fluent Spanish. This spirit continued when he left Brown University and took an assignment to explore and map in the Arctic for the Canadian Government.

Dick was the heart and soul of Toastmasters Club 122 which he joined in 1974. He was a regular member for over 40 years. This club was very dear to him and he rarely missed a single Tuesday night meeting. Dick set the tone for the club as a place where everybody could improve their public speaking skills, while making great friends and having fun. Dick was an incredible speaker. But it was much more important to him to mentor others, than to impress them with his skills. His friendship will be deeply missed by the club.

Dick was always the optimist, even his geese are swans, as the expression goes. Dick is survived by his two loving children, Allison and Rick; three grandchildren, Alora, Amanda and Kelton; his sister-in-law Elizabeth Arms; his niece Meredith Arms Bzdak, two nephews, Bradford and JC Arter; and his best buddy Spud, his loyal Standard Poodle. Dick was lucky to find love a second time with Mercedes Martinez. They loved traveling to Mazatlán and they made many new friends along the way.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday May 5th, 2018 at 11:00 am at the Strong Thorne Chapel located at 1100 Coal Ave. SE, Albuquerque, NM, 87106. Should friends desire, contributions may be sent to Friends of the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge.

# Epilogue

## *Life and Other Endings*

We have been inspired and motivated for over twenty-five years by the words of great writers; we have summarized a bit of our own lives in this collection, but 1500 to 2000 words cannot really do justice to the activities and accomplishments of an eclectic group of minds such as we find in the Last Thursday Book Club.

We have lost some excellent people and superb minds over these years; we continue to find a few new ones (Karl Irons, formerly of Pagosa Springs, may soon be joining our ranks).

You read Bob Woods' *Microbiography*, but you should take a look at the articles he has published in *Mechanical Engineering* magazine over a decade or so. You read Dick Jensen's memoir: *A Coal Miner's Son Turned Professor*, and you may find the micro version printed in the Albuquerque Journal last year even more dramatic:

As a boy growing up in a poor family in a small town in Eastern Utah I could never have imagined that I would become a successful university professor. My father was a coal miner with an eighth grade education. My mother graduated at the top of her high school class but was unable to go to college. She married my dad soon after graduation. They had five children. We had little money, but my mother did her best to manage what we had. For example, she made many of our clothes. I can remember her buying bags of flour, washing the sacks, and sewing us shirts from the material. Other kids in my class also got shirts made from flour sacks. We probably didn't realize that we were poor because virtually everyone in the class was in the same financial situation. My father was disabled when he was 49, so my mother went to work as a waitress. I grew up on tips that she received at the café.

You read Charlie Palmer's writeup: *On Building Harpsichords*. The photos are dramatic, and you can view them here: [archive.org/details/HenschHarpsichord](http://archive.org/details/HenschHarpsichord). As a bonus, archive.org has linked to Charlie's photo directory several references on harpsichords, including the *Three Hundred Years...* referenced in his memoir, plus an audio file of a harpsichord recital.

LTBC acknowledges the assistance of **Michael Wilson** of Albuquerque Genealogical Society Special Interest Group on Writing and Publishing for his help with massaging the many chapters of this tome into a reasonable number of large PDF files for printing. Do you want more from the Last Thursday Book Club? Consider our blog: <http://ltbc-info.blogspot.com/>

We well realize that we few, we band of brothers, will not be around forever. However, *archive.org* will be. With that in mind, we provide this last page of group photos. And our best wishes to writers – and readers – everywhere.







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